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THE HIGHER ASPECTS OF GREEK RELIGION

LECTURES

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BY

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HIGHER ASPECTS OF GREEK RELIGION

LECTURE I

INTRODUCTORY SKETCH

THERE are many salient points of contrast that may guide our classification of religions; but none is more significant than that which strikes us at first glance in comparing early Hellenic polytheism with, for instance, early Christianity. We have, in the first, a religion that is pre-eminently social-political—one, that is, in which man's attachment to the divine powers is rooted in his corporate life, in the economy of the household, the tribe, the city; in the second, one whose objective or primary concern is the personal individual soul in its spiritual and mystic relations with God.

In selecting, then, the higher social aspects of Greek polytheism as the main subject of this course, I shall not be presenting the whole picture, indeed, but at least the dominant features of this religion, and an aspect which occasionally runs risk of being ignored by some of our English anthropologists. In my concluding lecture I shall give a short estimate of the higher personal, as distinct from the purely

social, religion of the Hellenes; for the subject is of great interest in itself, and in the study of certain departments of religious morality the one essentially involves the other.

As Greek religion is unusually complex, any partial statement of it is apt to be misleading unless accompanied by clear comprehension of the whole. For this years of study are necessary; but it may assist the understanding of this special subject that I am going to treat, if I preface it by an outline sketch of the general phenomena and of the conclusions at which I have arrived concerning them.

Greek religion is presented to us by its various records mainly as a polytheism of personal divinities, grouped in certain family relationships around and under a supreme god. Theoretically the chief divinity is male in sky, earth, and sea, but in certain localities the goddess-cult is more powerful. The higher beings are rarely recognisable as personifications of physical forces of nature, and it is only of a very few of them that a nature-origin can be posited or proved; and though many of them have special departments of nature for their peculiar concern, they are chiefly to be regarded as ethical and intellectual personalities, friendly on the whole to man and powerful to aid in all that concerns his physical and social life. These elements in Greek religion belong to theism, and, from the social and political point of view, these are by far the most important. And in these theistic creations of the Hellene the dominant impulse was that which we call anthropomorphism, a mode of feeling

and thought to which the average Greek temperament was so attracted that both the artistic and the religious history of the race were mainly determined by it. For instance, it explains the comparative absence of mysticism in this religion and the strong bias towards hero-cult which can be traced from the pre-Homeric age onwards. It equally explains the iconic or idolatrous impulse which has left so deep an imprint upon pre-Christian Hellenism and on the Greek Christian Church.

But we must also reckon with the lower products and phenomena which it has been the chief function of modern anthropology to explore and explain. Besides the worship of these glorified anthropomorphic beings called "theoi," we have to deal with facts that seem to point to direct worship, or at least the respectful tendance, of animals, the ritual of certain localities prescribing an offering, for instance, to the flies, to the wolves, or to a pig. And one of the high divinities might at times be imagined as incarnate in the animal, Apollo possibly in the wolf, Poseidon in the horse, Dionysos in the bull and goat. We may regard these beliefs and practices as the deposit of an age, not indeed of pure theriomorphism—for it is very doubtful if such ever existed in the history of religions—but of one when the anthropomorphic imagination was unstable and the divinity might be conceived as embodied now in human now in animal form. Again, though the Greek imagination tended forcibly towards the concrete and definite, it admitted the apprehension of vaguer, more inchoate, forms of

nameless daimones or "theoi," such as those who preside over birth—Γενετυλλίδες, Κωλιάδες—or over the lower world with its associations of death and of the curse and the miasma of bloodshed, the Ἐρινύες, Πραξιδίκαι, Θεοὶ Μειλίχιοι; such figures showing a far less degree of anthropomorphic personification than the robust personages of the higher polytheism, who were as vividly realised as are the divine figures of modern Mediterranean religion.

But, furthermore, certain objects of Greek cult remained outside the region of that which we call personal theism; and we have records or hints of direct worship being offered to the thunder or the thunder-stone, the winds, the rivers and streams, and with greater earnestness and profit to the holy hearth of the house. And while the same anthropomorphic bias which succeeded in evolving or detaching the river-god or nymph from the element gave the stimulus to a religious art the most beautiful the world has seen, yet certain aniconic sacred things that we may call fetishes—the hewn stock or pillar, the meteorite, the axe—continued to appeal to the religious awe both of individuals and states from the earliest to the latest periods of this polytheism.

These diverse phenomena may be classified under various categories for which the science of religions has invented technical terms. The salient and predominant portion of Hellenic worship and belief may be called theism, which is based on the perception of concrete individual deities; where we find a nature-object, wind, water, or thunder, revered as if endowed

with a soul, we term this mental process animism, a term, however, only rarely applicable to the Greek phenomena apart from the worship of the dead, applicable, for instance, to the Attic cult of the Tritopatores, who appear to have been regarded partly as ancestral ghosts, partly as wind-powers; thirdly, where we find the object worshipped in and for itself as sentient and animate, a thunder-stone, moving water, a blazing hearth, we should describe the religious consciousness as animatism rather than animism, which implies the definite conception of souls or spirits.

It is a marked feature of the evolution of Greek religion that the lower and more embryonic forms of faith survive through the ages by the side of the higher and more developed. This was natural, because in its history there were no cataclysms, no violent spiritual revolutions breaking away with the past and endeavouring to obliterate it. The priesthood was conservative and did not champion spiritual or intellectual reform. At times a "prophet" emerges, but not with the significance or the mission of an Isaiah: the prophet Epimenides of Crete was merely the propagator of an elaborate system of purification; the Orphic-Pythagorean sectaries who were the first missionaries in Hellas were chiefly concerned with preaching a new theory and system for the posthumous salvation of the soul; and, while their theology contained in it many germs of higher thought, it was more deeply rooted in savagery than the ordinary Hellenic. Progress there certainly was

through the slow course of centuries, but it was gradual and half-unconscious; crude and savage practices gradually fell into desuetude or retained only a faint semblance of life. No doubt philosophy contributed much to this progress, though indirectly; the philosophic protest was more usually directed against the immoralities of mythology than against the prevailing forms of worship and the structure of the polytheism. In any case, this protest, of whatever avail it was, forms part of the higher history of Hellenic religious thought.

Finally, the slightest general sketch of this polytheism must not omit to include the element of magic, a practice which some writers regard as antagonistic to real religion and which certainly implies a different relation between man and God from that assumed by worship and prayer, but which nevertheless tends to maintain itself openly or disguised in much of the higher ritual of the nations. Thus the Greek rites of sacrifice, prayer, and hymn were in the main religion, pure and simple; but the invocation of the potent names of the divinity was at one time supposed no doubt to have a magic power of compulsion. The newly discovered hymn of the Kouretes[1] reveals the youthful priests "leaping" for the good of the fields and the crops, and the young god, Zeus Κοῦρος, is entreated or commanded to "leap" with them—that is, to practise the same magic for the land. Yet Greek religion early rose high above the magic level, and

[1] Vide *Annual of the British School at Athens*, 1908–1909, p. 345.

the evils of magic-practices, familiar to us in the record of other societies, are not clearly attested of early Greece. We do not hear of witch-finders and homicidal sorcerers. Magic tablets, by means of which the life of a person was devoted to destruction by nailing down his name, the "defixionum tabellæ,"[1] are not found before the fifth century at the earliest, and we have reason to suppose that Orphic influences emanating from a religion originally non-Hellenic suggested their use; and some of them in the fourth and third centuries bear the form of a religious prayer merely. In a fifth-century inscription containing the commination service of Teos,[2] we have the first proof that magic was feared as a public danger: "Whosoever maketh baneful drugs against the Teians, whether against individuals or the whole people, may he perish, both he and his offspring"; and Plato,[3] in his *Laws*, frames certain legislation against those who endeavour to injure others by spells and invocations, concerning the efficacy of which the philosopher in his mental decay is not able to make up his mind. But it was mainly in the Græco-Roman period, under the influence of the Oriental spirit and in combination with the daimonistic theory of later theosophy, that magic assumed formidable dimensions and became a potent cause of intellectual decline.

These various strains in this complex polytheism afford various problems to the historian of origins,

[1] Jevons' *Transactions of Congress of History of Religions*, 1908, vol. ii. p. 131.

[2] Roehl, *Inscr. Græc. Antiq.*, 497 : *vide* Miss Harrison, *Prolegomena*, p. 142.

[3] p. 932 E–933 E.

and suggest many difficult questions concerning the ethnology and the early formative factors of Greek religion. As the student is constantly being called upon to adjust himself in regard to these speculations concerning origin and race, a brief statement of my own views may serve to clear the ground on which I may afterwards expose the higher aspects of the religion. No ethnologist of repute will now dispute the theorem that the historic Hellenic peoples were the product of a fusion between certain tribes coming from the North, "Aryan" in speech and social system, and an indigenous Mediterranean stock with whom they intermingled as conquerors or by peaceful intermarriage. And this latter race we now know, thanks to the discoveries in Crete, Mycenæ, and elsewhere, to have been one of high culture in respect of the arts and the other departments of social life. Though the northern immigrants may have temporarily interrupted and impaired the culture, we may be sure that they did not destroy or uproot the indigenous religion. A clear comprehension, then, of this latter is as necessary for the solution of the Hellenic problem as is a knowledge of the religious rites and personalities that the Aryan immigrants brought with them from the North. At present we are far from being completely informed on either of these sides; but the discoveries and researches of Sir Arthur Evans and others,[1] on the soil of Crete and other centres of the

[1] *Vide* A. Evans' "Mycenæan Tree- and Pillar-cult," in *Journ. Hellen. Studies,* 1901. R. Burrows, *The Discoveries in Crete,* pp. 31–32, 112–116, 127–128.

Minoan-Mycenæan culture, have established certain facts of great importance for our religious problem, and we can to some extent reconstruct the features of the Mediterranean religion that the Northerners found established in the Southern Greek lands.

The most striking figure in the Minoan worship was a great goddess, conceived mainly as a mother but here and there also as virginal, imagined as a mountain goddess, whose familiar animals were the lion and the snake, and ethnically related to the Phrygian Cybele and the ancestress of the Cretan Rhea and probably of some Hellenic goddesses. By her side is sometimes represented a youthful deity imagined probably as her lover or son. We discern also the figure of a sky-god, armed and descending through the air. But we cannot doubt but that the goddess-cult was the predominant factor of the religion. And this accords with the interesting results gained by the excavations conducted by Dr Waldstein on the site of the Argive Heræum, which attest an immemorial goddess-cult on this spot. The Minoan imagination of the divinity was clearly anthropomorphic, but probably admitted the idea that it might occasionally be embodied in animal form; that is to say, the anthropomorphism was not yet stable. That the Cretan religion ran riot in a totemistic theriolatry was an erroneous conception suggested by the misinterpretation of certain devices on Cretan signet-rings and seals.[1] Besides the higher

[1] *Vide* Cook, "Animal Worship in the Mycenæan Age," *Hellen. Journ.*, 1894.

divinities, we have reason to suppose that the Cretan-Minoan religion admitted the divine ancestor to a share in worship; and the relation of the king to the deity was evidently most intimate. The legend of King Minos' intercourse with Zeus is an indication which gains in significance by the important fact, revealed by the excavations, that the only shrines were within the king's palace, no constructed temples on open sites other than the cave-shrines having as yet been found in Minoan Crete. As regards the ritual of this period, the famous sarcophagus found at Hagia Triada[1] reveals a ceremony of blood-offering, in which the blood of the sacred ox is first caught in a receptacle and then poured on an altar; we may take this as evidence of the idea of a mystic potency inherent in the blood of the victim. The skin of the sacrificed ox seems also to have been sacred, for four of the worshippers are wearing it; and the rite differs in details of some importance from the later Hellenic.

Finally, we have faint glimpses in Cretan mythology of a communion-service in which the mortal was absorbed into the divine nature by the simulated fiction of a holy marriage; a mystery much enacted by the later Cybele-ritual, which, we may believe, descended collaterally from a Minoan source.[2]

The last point worth noting here is that the temple-service of this earlier pre-Hellenic culture

[1] *Vide* Paribeni in *Monumenti Antichi* (*dei Lincei*), xix. p. 1, etc., Pls. i. and ii.

[2] *Vide* my *Cults of the Greek States*, iii. pp. 298–302.

was probably aniconic; the human image of the divinity, though carved for other purposes, was not set up as the central object of worship; the sacred "agalmata," the tokens of the divine presence, were the axe, the pillar, even the cross.

We may now turn to the other, probably the predominating, factor of the Hellenism that developed in these lands, and consider the stage of religious development reached by the earliest "Aryan-Hellenic" immigrants from the North, the ideas and forms and personages of their cults, if it is possible to discover them. No one will now set forth to reconstruct an aboriginal Indo-Germanic religion; the fanciful structures set up by former scholars have long passed into the limbo of abortive anthropology. But the far more limited problem just stated ought not to lie beyond the range of modern science, especially as the suspicion grows that the breaking into the Southern Peninsula from the Balkans of the warlike tribes of North-Aryan kinship—Achæans, Minyai, Dryopes, Ionians, and others—was a late event in Mediterranean history, later perhaps than the middle of the second millennium; for this has been strongly corroborated by recent valuable exploration of the plain of Thessaly by Messrs Wace and Thompson,[1] revealing to us this desirable grass-region as peopled down to a period later perhaps than 1500 B.C. by a race still on the neolithic level, a people living defencelessly in villages on the plain, not yet disturbed by the

[1] Vide *Hellenic Journal*, xxviii. p. 323, xxix. p. 359, xxx. p. 360.

trampling of the invader or by the rumour of war from the North. Let us assume that the Achæan and his kinsfolk of other warlike tribes were forcing their way South at some time in the first half of the second millennium, arriving thus at the home that they were to make famous about the zenith of the Minoan age and not so many centuries before the Homeric. How, then, are we to get to know the religion of the proto-Hellene, who is, after all, not so remote from us? The comparative argument from other Aryan religions is always at any point capable of deceiving us. Still, our convictions cannot help being influenced by what we know of other Aryan races at any early period in their history; and by far the most momentous and earliest fact in the religious history of any Aryan race is revealed to us by the newly discovered cuneiform inscription found at Boghaz-Keui, dating not far from 1400 B.C.[1] It reveals to us that the Vedic-Iranian religion had already reached the higher stage of theism at this period, the names Mitra, Varuna, being already applied to personal gods.

To suppose that the proto-Hellenic Aryan was in the godless stage, worshipping perhaps at best vague and formless "numina" or shadowy divine potencies rather than persons, or worshipping only some totem-animal, or perhaps nothing at all, and that the revelation of the higher polytheism was reserved for him

[1] *Vide* E. Meyer, "Das erste auftreten der Aryer in der Geschichte," in the *Sitzungsberichte d. Königl. preuss. Akad. Wissensch.*, 1908, p. 14.

until after he had entered upon his Southern inheritance, all this is to my mind a strong delusion, making havoc of the reasonable interpretation of later contemporary and prehistoric facts.

We may be able by a logical reconstruction of the débris of prehistoric religious deposits to exhibit the "making of a god"; but the period when "Zeus was not yet Zeus" does not belong to the earliest history of the race whom we may dare to call Aryan-Hellenic. The proto-Hellenes brought in certain deities already made, and found certain others already made and crystallised in the Mediterranean area over which they spread.

Assuming this, we may feel that the question —what was the primitive nature-significance or animistic germ of this or that Hellenic divinity?— though a legitimate one, may really start us down a false track. For, if the early invaders adopted a Minoan-Mycenæan divinity, say Rhea or Artemis or Aphrodite, she would be for them just Rhea or Artemis or Aphrodite, a concrete personality as real for them as the Virgin Mary for their late descendants; they might not be inclined to inquire about, or even to suspect, the natural phenomenon in the background of these personages.

If this view, which I cannot here argue further, is correct, and if the earliest Hellenes were already somewhat advanced in respect of theistic thought and belief, the question at once arises whether we can distinguish between the divinities of the Northern immigrants and those which they adopted from the

earlier Mediterranean race. We are not yet near the final settlement of this question; doubtless we shall be brought nearer to it by the decipherment of the Ægean-Minoan script, if that feat is ever accomplished. For the present we have primarily the clue of language; those names of divinities in which we can discover with certainty or reasonable probability a Hellenic or even an Indo-Germanic stem are generally regarded as belonging to the tradition of the invaders from the North; such are Zeus, the stem of whose name was used for the divine names belonging to other Aryan races, probably Poseidon, Demeter, Hestia, Pan. But the names of other leading divinities—such as Athena, Aphrodite, Artemis, Hephaistos—remain etymological puzzles and may be derived from the non-Hellenic speech of indigenous peoples. Yet even if we could be more sure than we are about the names, the etymology of the names does not always bring us to the inwardness of the facts. The Aryan Hellenes may have attached their own divine names Demeter and Hera to the great goddesses of Eleusis and Argos; but the mystery worship of Eleusis may well have been a heritage of the aboriginal population and the goddess of Argos may have been many centuries older than the earliest probable date that can be assigned to the first inroads of the Northern invaders.

But sometimes certain facts of cult and ritual will help us to decide more surely than the etymological analysis of names. We do not know the

meaning of the name Apollon; but we may be sure that he came in from the North, because his sacred pilgrims' way, which he himself traversed every fourth year in the incarnation of a beautiful boy, led from Tempe to Delphi, and his other sacred route, down which came the yearly hyperborean offerings from the North, passed down the Adriatic shores of Greece to Dodona; we may infer that the god himself had traversed both these natural highways of the Northerners' invasion. And these facts of well-attested ancient ritual outweigh all that has been said by Wilamowitz in favour of his hypothesis that Apollo arose in Lycia. Again, the Northern origin of Poseidon is corroborated by the geographical record of his cult. Still clearer is the evidence concerning Dionysos, the deity who overshadowed most others in the later Hellenism; it is the generally accepted view that his cult originated among a Thracian people of Indo-Germanic speech.

Another test that may help us in dealing with the ethnic problems of this composite religion is the greater or lesser prominence of the cult of the god or the goddess. Now, the early records of such Aryan peoples as the Vedic-Indians, the Iranians, the Teutonic and Slavonic nations, indicate the predominance of the male divinity, although goddess-worship is found in all these races and cannot be explained away as a non-Aryan phenomenon. Therefore the supremacy of the father-god Zeus, who took his name Olympios from the distant mountain on the northern confines of Greece, the

early influence in Thessaly and North Greece of such gods as Poseidon and Apollo, can be regarded as the products of the northern religious tradition.

On the other hand, certain districts of the Mediterranean, especially those in which the Minoan-Mycenæan culture flourished, have been from immemorial time under the rule of the goddess. The Aryan conquerors from the North, in obedience to a racial instinct, might endeavour to supplant this; as we find the Bithynians, Aryan cousins of the Thrako-Phrygians, endeavouring to exalt the father-god above the great mother, Cybele. But the old tradition of the land was often invincible against such attempts. Where, then, we find the goddess supreme, as at Athens, Argos, Crete, Samos, and elsewhere, we may discern here in the composite religion the element contributed by the older indigenous culture. We may draw the same conclusion when we find the virginity of the goddess a prevailing dogma; for, though certain Aryan mythologies—the Teutonic, for instance—are aware of a few subordinate divine figures conceived as virginal, yet the tendency of the Indo-Germanic pantheons is to link the goddess with the god.

I have been considering the ethnic question as if we had only to estimate the respective force of the Northern and the Minoan-Mycenæan influence on Greek polytheism. I am aware of the other theories put forward by certain specialists who would find in Babylon or Egypt the origins of much of it.

The Babylonian question I have somewhat elabo-

rately discussed in a former course of lectures,[1] and I have arrived at the negative conviction that, in the second millennium B.C., Babylon exercised no influence at all on the then primitive Greek polytheism.

The Egyptian theory is not championed by any competent student of comparative religion. M. Foucart's attempt to prove the Egyptian origin of the Eleusinian mysteries[2] fails to convince a trained critic. On the other hand, it is reasonable to suppose that early Egyptian religion cast certain rays upon Minoan Crete; and if they reached ultimately as far as the Greek mainland, it was probably through the religious atmosphere of this great island. In the main, therefore, the view that the chief constituents of the polytheism of historic Greece are a Northern religious tradition and an indigenous Mediterranean, of which the Minoan-Mycenæan religion was the culminating point, is not obviously too narrow. For the Asiatic Greeks we must reckon also with the religious traditions of the Anatolian Coast, which in many respects were not alien to those of Crete.

This slight sketch may suffice at present as a background for the social-religious phenomena which I have selected as a topic for this course. But in following down certain lines of religious development one is always confronted with the chronological question: what antiquity is to be assigned to the birth of some of the higher products of the later

[1] Vide *Greece and Babylon* (1911).

[2] *Recherches sur l'origine et la nature des mystères d'Éleusis*, 1895; cf. my *Cults of the Greek States*, iii. 141–143.

historic period? And this involves a question as to the level of political and religious character attained by those Northern races at the period of their early immigration. At the best our answer can only be tentative, a hypothetical construction based partly upon Homeric evidence and partly on the later records concerning early institutions, early cults, and the diffusion of cults.

How, then, are we to estimate the Homeric evidence? The question is vast and intricate, as every scholar knows, and every student of Greek religion must form some opinion about it. I can only here state my own without argument. I believe that the poems give us a partial picture of the Greek world of a period not far from 1000 B.C.; therefore, as moral and religious forms and sentiments do not spring up in a year, but are very slow in evolution, I believe we can cautiously argue back from the Homeric poems so as to gain some conception of the moral and religious forces at work in the centuries preceding the age of the poet. Now, the religion of Homer strikes the student who is trained in the comparative criticism of this field as generally advanced in respect of form and ritual, and generally elevated in sentiment; in spite of occasional frivolities, such as are found in most poetry that deals with the actions of gods, the moral-religious tone is often earnest and profound; in the cult-service and in the relations between men and the deities, there is nothing savage or degrading. And the almost entire absence of any element of savagery has appeared to many

scholars a puzzle, of which different solutions have been offered. According to Professor Murray,[1] Homer—or rather the Homeric Syndicate—has deliberately expurgated and refined away the dross of savagery from the materials out of which the poems were built; or this expurgation may have been due to the educational policy of Peisistratos and his literary committee. Mr Lang, in strong opposition,[2] avers that they present us with the picture of an Achæan religion, purer and more civilised than the later Ionian which is reflected in the post-Homeric Cycle; thus we gather that the Achæans were innocent of human sacrifice, magic, ghost-worship, purification by pig's blood, and such practices as are familiar to the anthropologist of savage life. I cannot believe that the truth lies in either of these views, while the second appears to me even further removed from it than the first. It seems unlikely that Homer was conscious of a mission, or set to work as a moral reformer; one would not call the authors of the *Volsunga Saga* and the *Nibelungen-Lied* expurgators because they omit much that was dark and repulsive in old Teutonic ritual. The chance is likely enough that Homer, like Shakespeare, was of a nature more refined, high-bred, and delicate than his average contemporary; but it is better to suppose that he, like Shakespeare, was of his age, if above it at points. But most paradoxical in this theory of expurgation is the suggestion that Peisistratos and his circle were really responsible for what

[1] *The Rise of the Greek Epic.*
[2] *The World of Homer.*

we call Homeric religion; no one who is thoroughly conversant with the religious facts of Peisistratean Athens could believe this for a moment. On the other hand, Mr Lang's error appears to me no less serious; to construct an imaginary Achæan religion out of Homer's silences is a dangerous adventure, and he himself has taught us how to criticise such procedure; let us try to construct an Elizabethan religion out of Shakespeare's silences, and then enjoy the ludicrously false picture that would emerge. The Shakespearean drama and a modern three-volume novel range over a wider surface of life than the *Iliad*; and yet they only reflect a small fraction of contemporary life, for every creator, however broad his range, can only select little and must omit much. The poet of the *Iliad* selects a four-days' episode of the Trojan war; reciting this in the comparatively refined hall of some chieftain, he would have been foolishly irrelevant if he had dragged in a reference to the burning of a scapegoat or the ritual-murder of a daughter, when his theme did not suggest such unpleasant topics; nor was it Shakespeare's business to allude to the torturing of Jesuits or the horrors of Spain. We will not, then, merely on the ground of Homer's silence, believe that the Achæans were innocent of human sacrifice. Nor, in fact, is the Homeric religion, critically studied, so unlike that of the later historic Greece as Mr Lang imagines. What Homer positively tells us, *valeat tanti*, let us accept it for what it is worth. He is good witness to his own period, within his limits, and

indirectly for the period preceding his; but he reveals to us only a portion of the whole.

Many years' study of the multiform evidence concerning the social-religious life of the pre-Homeric Northern tribes who came down to make Greece can only yield at most a probable hypothesis, scarcely a reasoned inductive certainty. I venture to embody some of my own conclusions in the following sketch, of which I recognise the precariousness.

The Achæans and the other kindred tribes entered the Southern Peninsula with a culture probably as advanced at least as that of the early Angli at the time of our migration, and with greater aptitude for absorbing the higher civilisation which they found: possessed of metals—bronze, at least—and of family institutions of patrilinear monogamic type, with which were associated the worship of the hearth and probably the cult of ancestors; equipped with some knowledge of agriculture, which was assisted by magico-religious agrarian rites such as the Thesmophoria, and consecrated by the cult of a corn-goddess or earth-goddess; endowed with a religion of the theistic type already somewhat advanced, but still cherishing many beliefs of the "animistic" or pre-animistic point of view. The sky-god Zeus was also in this aboriginal period a god of vegetation, and, as such, capable of functionising as a chthonian deity, so that the later distinction between Olympian and chthonian rites and cults is not to be regarded generally as a distinction between the North-Aryan and the Mediterranean strains in Greek religion. The high god was also

already moralised. Political life, with the germs of civic institutions, was already beginning, and certain deities were taking on a political character. Religion had advanced beyond the purely tribal stage, and certain tribes had deities like Zeus and Poseidon and Apollo in common. In the social-religious institutions connected with the tribal life there is little evidence of savagery. There is no proof of totemistic organisation ; for the zealots of totemism have wrongly interpreted certain phenomena that arose, not from totemism, but from theriolatry or the theriomorphic imagination of the deity, phenomena which are found at most stages of religion concurrently with anthropomorphism. Neither is there any clear evidence of those institutions that specially belong to savage tribal society—the compulsory initiation of the boys into tribal mysteries, or the painful ceremonies imposed upon girls on arrival at puberty. The great mysteries of historic Greece, being devoted to a great goddess, were probably of Mediterranean rather than North-Aryan origin ; the incoming Achæans and their kindred tribes may have possessed tribal mysteries,[1] such as those of Trophonios at Lebadeia and of Dryops, the eponymous ancestor of one of the oldest tribes of this group, but we have no record or hint of compulsory or general initiation. The puberty-ceremonies of girls, where we have any ancient ritual-evidence such as that of the Attic Brauronia, appear to have been harmless and free from the cruelty

[1] For the question of puberty-mysteries among other Aryan races, see Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, p. 466, for the Upanayana initiation.

and superstitions that burden these in most savage societies. From this we may conclude that in the proto-Hellenic period the tyranny of the tribal system had relaxed and the independent family life had gathered strength.

As regards ritual, the Northern tribes had not yet raised the temple or carved the idol; the holy place, in some way fenced off, might be a tree, or grove, or cave, with a pillar or stone altar marking the presence of the deity, for pillar-cult was not a specially Mediterranean product. The hymn, the choral dance, and the prayer were already developed, and the worship was partly magical, partly—perhaps mainly—religious.

As regards sacrifice, the two types of the blood-offering and the bloodless were prevalent, and the sacrifice was not merely regarded as a gift to the god, but the germs of the sacramental idea might be found in it. Human sacrifice was occasionally in vogue, though probably the progressive spirit of the societies was already in protest against it. Some ritual of purification from disease, death, childbirth, was doubtless part of the Northern tradition, as the antiquity of Apollo's title Φοῖβος might suggest; but the cathartic system sat lightly upon this people, and the idea of the dangerous miasma of the homicide had not yet developed, as we may safely in this respect interpret the silence of Homer; and for this, as for other reasons, we can believe that this virile race of men of clear and sane mental vision was not in bondage to the terrors of the ghost world.

Finally, we may discern that in spite of the penetration of religion into the whole social life of these peoples, religion was the ministrant rather than the master, the priest was a citizen, the servant not the despot of the State, and the societies could pursue their paths of secular progress untrammelled by a too powerful religious conservatism. What the Mediterranean influence could instil into them was the more intense religious life, and this influence began to work more strongly in the post-Homeric period.

LECTURE II

THE RELIGIOUS BOND OF THE FAMILY

THE only type of family organisation which is reflected clearly by the earliest Greek cults and cult-legends is the patrilinear, which reckons descent through the father and tends to centralise the kinsfolk on certain plots of land around the patriarchal hearth and homestead; and may have arisen in the more settled pastoral period and have been finally cemented by the agricultural economy.[1] It confronts us in the earliest records of every Aryan race, and generally in the Semitic communities.

On the other hand, the assertion has been confidently made that the pre-Hellenic Mediterranean stocks were matrilinear, counting descent through the female. I am not concerned to discuss the evidence for this, but only to reassert what I have tried to prove in detail elsewhere,[2] that this supposed matrilinear system has left no clear imprint of itself upon early or late Hellenic cult. The contrary has only been

[1] The Βουζύγαι, the "ox-yokers" at Athens who performed the "sacred ploughings" for the State, are also priests of Ζεὺς Τέλειος, the god of marriage. See my *Cults of the Greek States*, i. p. 157, R. 96c.

[2] "Sociologic Hypotheses concerning the Position of Women," in *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, 1904.

maintained mainly through ignorance of the modern evidence concerning the religion and the social forms of contemporary and ancient matrilinear societies. There is no need to summarise all the arguments. I will only allude to two points concerning which those who have not worked at all, or sufficiently, at the subject are still liable to be misled. It is thought that the frequent supremacy of the goddess in these lands is the reflex of a matrilinear society. We would judge it to be so if the goddess were habitually worshipped as an ancestress, if it were found that matrilinear societies are generally ruled by a queen, and that the religious ordering of these societies is in the hands of women and that women will naturally prefer a goddess to a god. But as these things are not generally so, the supremacy of the goddess craves, or at least admits, another explanation which need not be sociological at all. Again, the hasty imagination of M'Lennan has brought into certain vogue an interpretation of the story of Orestes' trial as involving a conflict between an older matrilinear system which the Erinyes represent with a later patrilinear which is championed by Apollo and Orestes.[1] He has misinterpreted the nature of the Erinyes and the facts of that *cause célèbre*, and caused others to misinterpret them. The Erinyes pursued the shedder of kindred blood; they had no prejudices; in fact, according to Hesiodic legend, they came into being through the outrage of a son on his father; under either system of descent, the mother is of the

[1] *Studies in Ancient History* (1886), pp. 211–215.

closest kin to her child and matricide is a terrible sin; but they would have pursued Orestes with equal ardour if he had killed his father, as they pursued Laios; they did not pursue Clytemnestra because, according to old Greek ideas, the wife is not akin to the husband.

Perhaps the earliest phenomenon discernible in the history of Hellenic family religion is the worship of the hearth. In Homer we have hints of this sanctity —we should not expect more than hints from him— in the fact that oath is taken in the name of the hearth, and that the suppliant acquires sacrosanct virtue by sitting at the hearth.[1] Hesiod is our earliest voucher for the personal goddess called Ἑστία.[2] But in times long anterior to his or Homer's the name and the thing were associated with a holy force that the Romans would call a *numen*, a divine potency animate or animistically conceived, that rarely in any period of actual cult developed a concrete personality of its own.[3] We have reason to suppose that in the prehistoric past of many, if not all, the Aryan races, the permanent hearth with its mysterious fire and stone basement was a holy object; for Greece at least, and for the kindred peoples of Italy the evidence from the prehistoric period is fairly clear.[4] Being mysteriously divine and itself the centre of the family life, worshipped by the household with a sacrifice

[1] *Od.*, xiv. 158; xix. 304. [2] *Theog.*, 453.

[3] *Vide* my *Cults*, v. pp. 345–365.

[4] *Vide* Frazer, "The Prytaneum, Temple of Vesta," in *Journal of Philology*, xiv. pp. 163, 169–171; Pfuhl in *Athenische Mittheilungen*, 1904, p. 351.

that appears in Greece to have been of sacramental type, we may imagine that it served as a religious bond for a system of family duties and morals. The records that are explicit concerning this are few but valuable, although in dealing with them we cannot always distinguish what is early from what is late. We see that in the pre-Homeric period, the hearth was the basis of that virtue of hospitality that protected the wanderer and the suppliant. We may also believe that in the same early age emerged the idea that the hearth was pure, for the same reason as an altar was pure, and must not be polluted by impure sights or actions. The earliest evidence for this is the tabu-law expressed in Hesiod's *Works and Days*.[1] And this special characteristic of the hearth divinity may have suggested certain ritual forms of purification. The interesting Attic ceremony called the Amphidromia,[2] in which the members of the family who had assisted at a birth ran round the hearth with the new-born child in their arms, must be regarded partly as a purification rite, and may also have been inspired by the idea that the legitimate infant should be duly presented to the holy hearth. Again, the feeling that the hearth was a centre from which purity radiated may be discerned in the cathartic rites at Athens, whereby the ecclesia was purified; it seems that the little pigs that were used for this purpose had first to be carried round the hearth of the city; and charged thus with divine influence they could dispel miasma elsewhere.

[1] l. 733.

[2] *Cults*, v. p. 356.

Hence, when Hestia emerges into a real personality, she is regarded as essentially virgin.

Now, this holy place in the midst of the ancient "Aryan" home, which appears not to have existed in the warmer region of Crete, might have been the centre of the highest family morality that was developed with monogamic institutions; and we must believe that it helped to provide a religious sanction to the family tie. We might expect to find the holy hearth and the personal goddess who emerged from it playing some part in the marriage ceremonies, but the cult-records scarcely attest this at all. The most significant expression in literature of the intensity of feeling evoked by this family-worship is the prayer of Alkestis in the play of Euripides:[1] "Lady-goddess, as I am going down to the grave, for the last time I will make my prayer to thee: foster my orphan children, and join to the one a loving wife and to the other a noble husband."

But, on the whole, the family-union of the early Hellenes and the morality by which it was cemented were safeguarded by the higher divinities of stronger personality, Zeus especially, Hera, Athena, Apollo. It is noteworthy that this people, unlike many others, imputed to their highest god the minutest personal concern in every part of their social organism.

It is interesting to find in our earliest records that the national god was associated with the family-

[1] *Alc.*, l. 163.

cult of each householder. Homer himself attests the worship of Zeus Ἑρκεῖος, the god of the ἕρκος or garth, whose altar stood in the courtyard of the early Hellenic house, round which all the kinsmen gathered for the sacrifice; the cult endured through the ages, and by the fifth century B.C. the sacred name could be used as a synonym for the abstract idea of kinship itself.[1] The high god was present also at the hearth; he himself was called Ἐφέστιος,[2] and under the shadow of his power the personal goddess Hestia grew up and was adopted as his daughter. Thus not only was the whole morality of the family, so far as this was given a religious colour by the later writers, consecrated by the worship of Zeus, but he himself, in spite of a licentious mythology, provides through his marriage with Hera the very archetype of the monogamic Aryan marriage. To establish this interesting fact we must study the religious ritual associated with a Hellenic marriage, so far as the fragmentary evidence allows us. No doubt the ceremonies varied in the different states; but what evidence has come down to us reveals little of barbarism,[3] little association with magic[4] compared for instance with the evidence of the Vedic ritual,[5] and it expresses a stronger

[1] For references see *Cults*, i. pp. 157–158.

[2] Herod., 1. 44; Schol. Aristoph., *Plut.*, 395.

[3] The form of bride-capture survived at Sparta (Plut., *Lycurg.*, 15), of the "Ehe-aufprobe" and the flight of the bride at Samos.

[4] The wearing of female dress by the bridegroom at Kos was a practice inspired probably by daimonistic magic.

[5] *Vide* Oldenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 462–465.

infusion of social-civic sentiment than is discernible in our own marriage-service. The union of the highest god and goddess was celebrated annually in many parts of Greece in a service that was called the ἱερὸς γάμος, or holy marriage, some of the details of which suggest an ancient date for its origin. Now, the fragment of Pherekydes, contained in a recently discovered papyrus, describes the momentous event, and in the narrative Zeus proclaims that it shall serve to men as an archetype and a law for the ritual of human marriage,[1] and a later authority[2] vouches for the fact that the ordinary bride and bridegroom performed some mimetic representation of this ἱερὸς γάμος. And this is to some extent corroborated by the newly discovered fragment of Callimachus' poem on the love-story of Akontios and Kydippe, of which the first few lines allude to the ordinance that before the wedding day the maid must go through a simulated union with a boy in imitation of Hera and her youthful divine lover.[3] By other acts of worship also, by sacrifice and invocation, the high god and his consort were most intimately associated with the rite of human marriage. A curious detail is recorded of the preliminary sacrifice to Hera by Plutarch,[4] who declares that before the victim was burnt on the altar the gall was extracted and buried by itself; he explains

[1] *Revue des Études Grecques*, 1897, p. 3.
[2] Photius, ii. 670 (Porson).
[3] *Oxyrh. Papyr.*, vii.; *Revue des Études Grecques*, 1910, p. 261.
[4] *Cong. Præc.*, p. 141 E.

this rule as dictated by the desire that the ensuing marriage should be without gall and bitterness. And we must, I think, accept his explanation, which is quite in accordance with the law of sympathetic magic that ruled the procedure of ancient sacrifice.

As the monogamic patrilinear marriage generally implies settled life, and in the evolution of society the natural economic basis of this would be agriculture, it might be expected that the ritual of human marriage would have been specially consecrated to Demeter the corn-goddess. We are surprised, therefore, to find but scanty evidence of this. Only an inscription from Kos proves that this goddess played some part in the marriage-service; and Plutarch speaks of "the ancient ordinance which the priestess of Demeter applied to you, the husband and wife, when you were being shut in the bridal-chamber together."[1] It may be that her presence was recognised also in that interesting Attic ritual recorded by the later Paroemiographi: it was the custom at Athens in the marriage ceremony for a boy whose parents were both alive—such being specially chosen for religious functions—to carry round a basket full of loaves and to recite the mystic formula, "I have fled from evil and have found a better thing."[2] Plutarch gives an explanation which seems to have been current, that the loaves symbolise the civilised life of the higher family-system as contrasted with the wilder wood-

[1] *Cults of the Greek States*, iii. 82.

[2] Plut., *Proverb. Alex.*, 16; cf. *Zenob.*, 3, 98.

land diet when man lived on berries. This is interesting, but we may believe that the bread-pannier served for some simple sacramental rite such as the Roman "confarreatio," in which the bride and bridegroom eat bread together; and this may have carried with it the mystic conception of union with the earth-mother of corn. If this interpretation were certain, it would prove the sacramental character of Attic marriage. The record certainly proves one other fact of interest and importance, namely, that Greek marriage was not only a religious act—there is ample other evidence to show that—but it was, in certain places and at certain times, assimilated to the liturgy of the mysteries. For the formula, "I have fled from evil and have found a better thing," has a mystic tone and is verbally the same as that which, as Demosthenes tells us, was used in the Phrygian mysteries of Dionysos-Sabazios.[1] Further, we note that this association between the marriage-ceremony and the mystery-rites is borne out by the application to both of the term "τέλος" [τελετή], "end," "initiation." Both may have been regarded from the point of view presented by M. van Gennep in his *Rites de passage*; both might be viewed as transitions from an old life to a new one presumably better, processes in which the initiate renounces or dies to the old and is reborn in the new. For the history of the ancient Hellenic marriage it would be a great gain if we could determine when first that mystic formula came into vogue in the

[1] *De Cor.*, § 259.

ceremony. It had probably been used in pre-Christian times, and St Paul's words in his Epistle to the Ephesians,[1] τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστί—"great is this mystery,"—which were momentous for the marriage-theory of the later Church, were in accordance both in spirit and in verbal form with earlier Hellenic religious custom rather than with Hebraic.

Another significant phenomenon observable occasionally in the old Greek marriage-ritual was the previous consecration of the bride to the local god or hero. Thus, in New-Ilium every betrothed maiden before the marriage day was obliged to go and bathe in the river Skamandros and to offer her virginity to the river-god. The explanation that I have suggested for this rite[2] is that the maiden was regarded as hereby entering into bodily communion with the divine foster-father of the land, so that the child born subsequently of the wedlock would have in it part of the tutelary spirit of the god, and thus the marriage and the birth would bring the mother and the child into communion, half-corporeal, half-mystic, with the people and the people's deity. A similar explanation might be applied to the rule recorded of Troizen, that the maidens there must consecrate their hair to Hippolytos before marriage,[3] thus putting themselves in communion with the city-hero, so that the child born of the marriage might be considered as his gift, an idea that would explain such names as "Herodotos." At

[1] v. 32. [2] *Cults*, v. 423.
[3] Paus., 2. 32. 2; Eur., *Hipp.*, 1425.

Athens the maid before marriage was taken by her parents and presented to Athena on the Acropolis, and a sacrifice was offered to the goddess.[1] Probably this was more than a mere gift or bribe to the goddess; for we may rather interpret it as an act of communion in which the bride at this period of her life, which was fraught with danger to herself and promise to the State, was consecrated to the tutelary deity and thus drew closer her ties with the community and its goddess. Similar records might be quoted of the other states of Greece, and we can draw the general conclusion that the consecration of a bride to a divinity was a normal part of the Hellenic marriage ceremony.

Another department of Greek religion whence a religious colour was reflected upon marriage was ancestor-worship and the tendance of the spirits of the dead. As the status of these wholly depended on the maintenance of the rites at their tombs, and these were only performed by members of the same family, a strong religious motive was furnished to matrimony, that a man might propagate lawful heirs to carry on the *προγονικὰ ἱερά*, the ancestor-cults.

Various passages in Greek literature give forcible expression to this social-religious idea, which appears more prominently still in Hindu literature, early and late. The orator Isaios testifies that "all who are going to die take forethought for themselves, that they may not leave their houses desolate, but that there may be someone to make offerings at the

[1] Photius, *s.v. προτελείαν ἡμέραν.*

family tombs."[1] Euripides also speaks of sons as the protectors and avengers of the family graves.[2] And hence we may explain the fact that, at Athens at least, a libation at the family tomb or an offering to the Tritopatores, the fictitious ancestors of the γένη or kinship-groups, was sometimes included in the marriage ceremonies.[3] When the family possessed a special hero-cult, the marriage might be performed in the hero's shrine, as was prescribed in the will of Epikteta.

This special aspect of marriage belongs to the narrow and lower sphere of family religion; but it is that which has probably inspired Plato with the most exalted conception concerning the duty of marriage and paternity that has ever been embodied in ethical or religious literature. In a passage in the *Laws* he tells us that a man "must cling to the eternal life of the world by leaving behind him his children's children so that they may minister to God in his place."[4] No such spiritual utterance on the subject appears in the Mazdean sacred books, though the sentiment would have appealed to Zarathustra, in whose creed every good Mazdean ranked as Ahura-Mazda's champion and every good Mazdean must marry.

Thus, it is wholly true to say that the association of marriage with religion was as close in civilised

[1] Περὶ τοῦ Ἀπολλοδ. κληρ., p. 66 Bekk.
[2] Stobæus, *Floril.*, iii. p. 78.
[3] Æsch. *Choeph.*, 486; Photius, *s.v. Tritopatores.*
[4] p. 773 E.

Greece as it is or has been in Christendom. But the religious point of view is widely different, and to note the difference illuminates the gulf between the old Hellenic and the Christian ideal. While the latter looked mainly to the individual soul, and its main concern was the gospel of purity, the social religion of Greece looked to the State and to the family as a unit of the State. Thus, the State-religion and the State-law could enjoin marriage as a duty. At Sparta a man was punished for celibacy, or for marrying late or marrying badly ;[1] and in Plato's commonwealth fines were imposed on those who remained single past a certain age, to be paid into the temple of Hera, the goddess of marriage.[2] A fine was claimed by the same divinity from the Athenian archon who failed to enforce the rules concerning the marriage of orphan-heiresses.[3] The spirit of Greek religion is, in fact, entirely in accord with that dictum expressed by Plato in the *Laws*,[4]—so antagonistic to modern sentiment—namely, that a man in his choice of a wife must be guided by the interests of the State, not by his own pleasure; and Aristotle in his *Politics* takes the same view. In fact, to the ethical and religious theory of the ancient classical communities romantic sentiment would appear merely egoism, and the religious and philosophic ideal of marriage was wholly altruistic.

A further question arises, whether ancient Hellenic

[1] Plut., *Lycurg.*, 15, and *Pollux*, 8. 40.
[2] *Laws*, p. 774 A.
[3] Demosth. in *Makart.*, § 54.
[4] p. 773 B.

religion agreed with our own in this respect, that conjugal infidelity was considered a religious offence. *A priori* we might expect that it would be so considered according to the logical law of ritual; for any compact consecrated by the presence of or the appeal to divine powers engenders the belief that these will be offended by its violation. But the only public record —so far as I can find—that has come down to us from Greek antiquity, showing that a religious penalty was inflicted in a flagrant case of adultery, is that law which Demosthenes, or the pseudo-Demosthenes, quotes in the speech against Neaira, that the woman taken *flagrante delicto* was excluded from the public temples, and that if she entered them she was liable to any punishment short of death; and commenting on it, the speaker declares that its intention was to keep the public places of worship clear from pollution and impiety.[1]

It is probable that this severe law prevailed elsewhere than at Athens; for the female philosopher Theano, of the Pythagorean school, gives it as a formal maxim that the adulteress was for ever to be excluded from temple worship.[2]

Doubtless the popular Greek morality, that reprobated adultery both in the case of the husband and the wife, was associated with a certain religious feeling, though only a few utterances of the higher literature survive to attest the association. We have a striking phrase in the *Eumenides* of Æschylus: "The fated bond of the marriage-bed guarded by

[1] §§ 85–87. [2] Clem. Alex., *Strom.*, p. 619, *Pott.*

justice is stronger than an oath,"[1] and in the same passage Apollo reproaches the Erinyes for their indifference to the sin of Clytemnestra: "Verily thou bringest to nought the pledges of Zeus and Hera, the powers of marriage"; words which involve the idea that the adulteress and murderess had sinned against the high divinities in whose name the marriage-rite was concluded. The Erinyes defend themselves by limiting their own jurisprudence to cases of kindred bloodshed, and maintain that the wife is not of blood-kin to the husband. But in Homer their powers are conceived as wider than this; and in the *Ajax* of Sophocles they are invoked as the "holy ones whose eyes behold all mortal sin and suffering."[2] Hence we need not suspect the passage in the *Electra* of the same poet which is significant for our present purpose, in which the Erinyes are spoken of as "looking with concern on those who die unrighteously and those who are betrayed in their marriage-beds."[3] It might seem at first sight, on the evidence of these two last citations, that the Erinyes were popularly regarded as guardians in general of the moral law, punishing not only murder and breaches of the marriage-tie, but all wrong of man against man, and that therefore Greek religion and social morality were coextensive. But the facts do not appear to warrant this large conclusion. It is true that the powers and functions of the Erinyes arose in a great degree from the ancient belief in the power of the curse, and anyone who was wronged

[1] l. 217–218. [2] l. 836. [3] l. 114–115.

might avail himself of this mystic weapon. But in the older period their activity seems to have been evoked chiefly by murder and possibly by incest;[1] in the later period, according to the popular view, they were little more than executors of the wrath of the slain man; nor are they mentioned among the deities whom the curse-tablets, the *defixionum tabellæ*, invoke.[2] Ordinary sexual offences against the morality of the family were apparently not denounced in any public or private commination. Its religious safeguard was the appeal to the State-divinities of marriage, and in lesser degree the ancestral spirits of the family-cult. The passage quoted above from the *Eumenides* agrees with the words of Theseus in the *Hippolytos* of Euripides: "Hippolytos has dared to violate my marriage-bed, paying no honour to the solemn eye of Zeus,"[3] such an imputed act dishonouring at once the high god of marriage and the god who protected the father's right.

Even in the later Pythagorean ethic, in spite of its alien mysticism, the old state-gods of Greece were not yet wholly dethroned from their immemorial privilege of protecting the purity of family life. Phintys, the female Pythagorean philosopher, in her

[1] As regards this latter sin we have only the doubtful evidence of the passage in the *Odyssey*, 11. 280, describing the woes of Œdipus brought about by the Erinyes of his mother, but the ground of her curse may have been her own death and his parricide. A late Phrygian inscription shows us Apollo Lairbenos punishing a sin of incest, probably not as a social offence but as a stain on the purity of his temple; *vide* Ramsay in *Hellen. Journ.*, x. p. 219.

[2] *Vide supra*, p. 7.

[3] l. 885–886.

book on "wifely continence,"[1] declares that the adulteress "who brings bastards into the house and kindred-circle instead of true-born supporters of the household, dishonours the deities of birth and kindred, dishonours also the deities ordained by nature, by whom she swore that she would unite with her husband for full fellowship of life and for the production of lawful children."[2] Such a woman, she proceeds, is excommunicate: "No purification can avail, so that she should ever again be able to approach the altars and temples of the gods, pure and beloved by them: for the divine power is most inexorable in respect of such offences." Doubtless such austere religious ethic was above the standard of the popular feeling; yet there was much in the popular religion that prompted it. The θεοὶ γενέθλιοι whom Phintys invokes belong to it, and these are *par excellence* Zeus and Hera. And who are those whom she strangely called οἱ φύσει θεοί, "deities ordained by nature"? The context suggests that they are the ancestral spirits of the family, οἱ πατέρες, "the fathers," by whom the wife swears to be faithful; and we have seen that in the popular ritual of the Greek marriage the ancestors and heroes had their part.

The passages just quoted express the social-religious value of continence and married fidelity, and mainly, it is to be noted, as a duty of the woman rather than of the man. Unchastity in an unmarried daughter

[1] Stobæus, *Floril.*, 74, § 60 (Meineke, 3. 64).

[2] This reads somewhat like a wedding-service.

could not normally be regarded as a sin, but as a social wrong to the family; and the few myths that recount cruel punishments inflicted by the fathers for this offence are prompted by the feeling that the daughter ruined her chance of marriage by the loss of her virginity. A political religion like the Hellenic could only commend the virtues of chastity from the point of view of social utility, looking to the purity of the family, the birth of lawful and healthy children, the maintenance of family-cults. It was wholly alien to its spirit to exalt virginity as an abstract ideal desirable for the individual soul above all other goods. It might occasionally be required of the priestess, but then only for certain ends of state; for the old Hellenic religion, apart from the mysteries, was never individualistic, and its objective was always a social organism, family, gens, or city. Thus, a late devotee of the old Hellenism like Dio Chrysostom inveighs as forcibly as St Paul against the morbid vices of Græco-Roman society; but not so much because of their intrinsic stain or impurity, as because those who commit them sin against "Zeus the birth-god, Hera the deity of marriage, Artemis and the other goddesses of child-birth."[1] He inveighs, that is, against the evil that destroys the family and diminishes the birth-rate. And lest we should think that so late a writer is no trustworthy exponent of Hellenism, we should observe that the spirit of his sermon agrees with the story that Peisandros, the old epic poet of Rhodes,

[1] *Or.*, 7, p. 269 R Dind., vol. i. p. 139.

brought into vogue in the seventh century B.C., namely, that the unnatural sin of Laios was an offence against Hera, the goddess of marriage, who sent the sphinx to punish the Thebans for not expelling him.[1] We know also, from the orator Æschines, that the law of Athens punished any citizen who prostituted himself with loss of civic rites, and this included excommunication from places of worship.

The exaltation of virginity as an end in itself is a momentous phenomenon in the religious history of later Mediterranean society and early Christendom, but to trace the evolution of it takes us beyond the limits of purely Hellenic religion.

For the protection of other sides of family life the Greek polytheism was richly equipped, and no religion was ever more deeply concerned with the consecration of family duties, the duty of father to son and son to father, of brothers to sisters, of all the kinsmen each to the other, who gathered round the same altar of "Zeus of the Courtyard." In fact, we may call the fulfilment of this great purpose the master-work of Greek religion. And the whole of this province belongs pre-eminently to the high god, Zeus himself. At this point it is interesting to mark the contrast between the old religion of Greece, which at an early period had developed the faith in concrete personal deities of highly individual type, and the vaguer Roman religion which dealt rather with "numina" and shadow-powers. The family morality of Rome was mainly safeguarded by the

[1] Schol. Eurip., *Phoen.*, 1760.

religious regard for the ancestral spirits, whose wrath would be incurred by the son who injured his father or the husband who wronged his wife.[1] The same idea can indeed be found in certain passages of Greek literature—in Plato's *Laws*, for example, where he dogmatises about the concern of the spirits of the dead in the maintenance of family duties. But all the morality of the Greek family is gathered up and centred in Zeus. He is Γενέθλιος, the chief of the Θεοὶ Γενεθλίοι. As Πατρῷος he guards the father's right; as Ὁμόγνιος he protects the tie of brothers and of other near kinsmen. These are not idle titles of poetic fancy, but express the most vital beliefs of Greek worship. The injured kinsman, father, son, or cousin, could invoke the god by such names, and the invocation would have the force of a magic spell in arousing the divine wrath against the wrong-doer; in fact, these names are veritable words of power drawn from the depth of the religious sentiment that gave life and force to the ancient family system. Zeus is called the kinsman, not because he is necessarily believed to be of kin to a particular family; he is called Πατρῷος by Strepsiades in the *Clouds* of Aristophanes, when his son assaults him, not because Zeus is the real ancestor of Strepsiades, but because the injured kinsman or the injured father needs the aid of Zeus, and in order to compel him to hear, imputes to him the human titles designating the relationship which is being infringed, thus establishing a com-

[1] *Vide* Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, p. 187; Plutarch, *Vit. Rom.*, 22.

munion of sentiment between himself and the god. It is this that gives to many of the Greek divine titles their singular force, and to the study of them its importance for the comprehension of the inner religious feeling. Thus, we can understand a strange phrase in the *Choephoroi* of Æschylus,[1] where Orestes appeals to Zeus against the murderers of his father: "When will Zeus 'Amphithales' bring down his hand and rive their heads?" "Amphithales" is only used in Attic Greek for the child who has both parents alive. Zeus protects the rights of such children, and to mark his sympathetic relation to them is himself called "Amphithales," and it is by this title that he will be invoked to avenge the child whose father has been wrongfully slain.[2]

The popular ethic of Greece, of which the Attic tragedians, comedians, and orators are at times the true exponents, followed closely the leading of Greek religion in respect of its theory of family duty. The commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother," was as strongly maintained in Hellas as in Israel. According to Xenokrates, certain laws, supposed to have been promulgated by the agrarian hero Triptolemos, were proclaimed in his own time at Eleusis, such as "to honour one's parents, to make to the deities an acceptable offering of fruits, not to injure animals."[3] Another echo of the religious ethic of the earlier periods of Greek society is preserved

[1] l. 394–396.

[2] *Vide* my article in the *Classical Quarterly*, 1910, p. 186.

[3] Vide *Cults*, iii. 189.

by Pindar, who narrates how Cheiron, the good centaur and trainer of heroes, gave such counsel to Achilles when he was leaving his father as, "Honour first of all Zeus, the lord of the loud-voiced thunder, and never amerce thy parents throughout their destined life of the honour due."[1] As for the higher ethic of the philosophic schools, its affinity or affiliation to the religion is a question of much labour and complexity, which I have only space to consider summarily and partially in regard to certain moral particulars. Plato, the most religious of the great philosophers, while indebted to Orphism for part of his ethical and psychical system, is inspired by the higher ideas of the contemporary polytheism in some of his moral reflections, especially in regard to his theory of family duties. This is most prominent in his *Laws*, the dullest and worst written of all his treatises, but perhaps the most valuable for the reflection it gives of the moral and religious world of his time. One or two passages may be selected from this work that are of interest for the present topic. In the fifth book he asserts his conviction that "he who honours and reveres the tie of kinship and the whole fellowship of the deities of kinship which is engendered by community of blood, will be likely to have the birth-gods propitious for the rearing of his own family." The θεοὶ ὁμόγνιοι and the θεοὶ Γενέθλιοι mentioned here, and the moral ideas that they stand for, are drawn directly from the religion of the people, and they are here made the

[1] *Pyth.*, 6. 22.

basis for a sermon on the text, "Maxima debetur pueris reverentia."[1] In the eleventh book he discusses the duties of the State towards orphans, and the moral reflections have again a marked religious colour:[2] "Let them fear the gods above, who are quick to regard the loneliness of the orphan . . . and are kindly to those who deal justly by them, but full of indignation against those who outrage the orphan and the desolate, for the gods regard the orphan as the greatest and holiest of trusts." The passage expresses not only the philosopher's individual belief, but also the deep popular sentiment of pity for children which had its roots in the family religion. It is to be noted that at Athens orphans were under the special care of "the archon." We can estimate the moral advance made by the later period, when we remember the words that Homer puts into the mouth of Andromache concerning the hardships and insults that the orphan who has lost his father must expect to endure.[3]

[1] p. 729 C. [2] p. 927 A. [3] *Il.*, 22. 495–500.

LECTURE III

FAMILY MORALITY (CONTINUED): TRIBAL AND CIVIC RELIGION

THE duty of children to parents is that part of family morality which was most emphasised in the ancient communities, and at Athens certain cases of the neglect of it were punishable by law; according to Xenophon,[1] by exclusion from office on the religious ground that a man who was guilty could not righteously perform the sacrifices on the city's behalf. And Plato, following again the lines of actual contemporary law and religion, gives to this duty an exalted place in his ethical-religious system. A striking passage in the *Laws*,[2] too long to quote, may be briefly summarised: Neither God nor man could countenance neglect of parents; the aged parent in the house should be regarded as of more honour and power than the statue of the divinity; the curse of the parent is more powerful than any other to win the hearing of the gods, so also is the blessing which he invokes on his children; and God himself

[1] *Memor.*, 2. The legal duty towards one's γονεῖς was extended even to the nurse and her mother and father, the term γονεῖς being applied to them also; *cf.* Isaios, *Or.*, 8, § 32.

[2] p. 930 E–932 A.

rejoices in the honour that the children show the father or mother or father's father.

The fifth-century literature generally is eloquent on the same theme. Xenophon, in the chapter from which the above citation is drawn, makes Socrates treat ingratitude to the mother as a religious offence. Euripides, in the *Herakleidai*,[1] declares that he who reverences his parents is "dear to the gods both in life and after death"; the latter part of the phrase may allude to the doctrine of posthumous rewards and punishments which was specially invoked by the later Orphic and Pythagorean writers as a sanction for this particular duty, or it may possibly refer to the belief in reunion after death with the ancestral spirits of the family, the same belief which helps to inspire Antigone with fortitude to face death for her brother's sake.

Many of the passages collected by Stobæus in his *Florilegium* on this particular moral point are culled from the later Pythagorean literature, and it is interesting to see how closely they follow the leading of Plato and the traditions of old Hellenic religion; and this is the case even when we should least expect it, namely, when Musonius, contributing a new moral idea to the world, protests against the prevalent custom of limiting the number of children, by exposure of infants or by procuring abortion or by other artificial methods such as were sanctioned by Plato and Aristotle; his protest is based, not as we might

[1] The verses are quoted by Stobæus, *Florileg.*, 78. 2 (Meineke, iii. 81), as from the *Herakleidai*, but they do not occur in our text.

expect on any Orphic ideal of purity or of the sacredness of all life, but on the ground that such actions injure the State and are therefore a wrong to a man's own clan and a sin against his family-gods and Zeus the god of kinship; still, as in earlier times, the appeal is heard to the θεοὶ πατρῶοι and Zeus Ὁμόγνιος. Christianity adopted this moral protest; but, having at first little sympathy with the point of view of the old political religion, based it on religious grounds that were wholly different.

Finally Plutarch, a man of varied religious lore and experienced in many alien creeds and systems, remained true to much of the tradition of the old civic religion of Hellas and expresses on this point the old Hellenic teaching: "Those who have fellowship with us in Zeus Ὁμόγνιος are they whom we invite to our weddings and birthday feasts"; and again, "Zeus Γενέθλιος executes the parent's curse."[1]

The last citation is an illustration from the end of paganism of that doctrine which was strongly alive in the Homeric period, which retained its hold on the later centuries, and to which many passages in Greek tragedy and the striking passage quoted above from Plato's *Laws* bear witness, namely, that the parent's right derives much of its religious sanction from the parent's curse. Questions of the ultimate origin of religious and moral concepts do not directly concern the present inquiry; but here a problem of origin may be touched upon, for we have reason to believe that the belief in a mystic power attaching to

[1] P. 679 D. *Quæst. Conviv.*, 5. 5; p. 766 C. *Amator.*

the curse has played a considerable part in the shaping of some morality and law, and was part of the source of the sanctity that attached to the parent's claim. The primary basis of the parent's authority was no doubt secular, human, "natural" as we say; but we know that in many societies it has been aided by religion. We are interested to discover how in early Hellenic society it came to attract this strong religious sentiment. Did this come to pass through the influence of the immemorial reverence for Zeus the father, radiating upon the relations of the human family, so that the father might appear to the children as a human Zeus? This is vague and fanciful, and we may find more precise causes at work. The father might acquire sacrosanct authority in more than one way. As the family priest he officiated at the altar of Zeus Ἑρκεῖος, and, as those who are in closest *rapport* with an altar acquire religious prestige and virtue, therefore a certain afflatus from Zeus could penetrate the father; also, if injured, he could appeal to the family god by the sympathetic and spell-name of "the father," a name by which he could establish religious contact between himself and Zeus Πατήρ or Πατρῶος. But, what was of most avail, he possessed in the highest degree the terrible power of the curse. Now, in its earliest form the curse belongs to magic rather than to religion—that is, it may exercise its blighting effect automatically without the aid of a personal god or spirit.[1]

[1] Œdipus, in the *Œd. Colon.* of Sophocles, l. 1375, appeals to his former curses to come to his aid as *σύμμαχοι*.

And it appears to have retained something of this automatic power in the imagination of the Greek communities, who, however, were obliged to associate it explicitly or implicitly with their belief in gods.[1] It differs from pure prayer, in so far as the curse is an ebullition of personal destructive will-power, which, when directed upon a divinity, might be imagined to constrain him against his will, or at least to arouse his reluctant and sleeping power. Shakespeare's words about curses—

> "I will not think but they ascend the sky,
> And there awake God's gentle-sleeping peace" [2]—

contain a thought that was deadly earnest for the old world. Only, the Hellenic mind in the time of Homer, and generally in the later period, imagined them rather as descending into the earth and awakening the Earth-powers—the nether Zeus, Persephone, and the Erinyes—who are in some degree the embodiments of the curse; for this reason Althaia in Homer's story smites on the ground with her hands when she wishes to arouse the curse-powers against her son. Now, it was natural to suppose that the elder had the stronger potency for cursing, because generally he would have the stronger "virtue" or will-force; hence we see the psychologic basis of Homer's pregnant phrase, "The Erinyes ever follow the lead of the elder-born," [3] and in proportion as the elder is set in authority, he acquires

[1] The fact that in the commination formulæ of Teos no deity is directly mentioned is no reason for supposing that none were present in the mind of the cursers; *vide supra*, p. 7.

[2] *Richard the Third*, Act I. Sc. iii. [3] *Il.*, 15. 204.

more "virtue"—what anthropology now calls "mana" —and more power to curse.

We see, then, that the curse is a non-moral agency, just as the blessing of Isaac is a non-moral automatic force. And it only comes into the higher view of Greek religion because it undoubtedly helped to establish the sanctity of the parent, from which the domestic morality drew its nourishment. The curse might indeed be a real hindrance to morality; and in some of the old Greek legends its activity may be called immoral, as were the curses on Œdipus, on the sons of Œdipus, and on Hippolytos, however much Greek tragedy might try to moralise them.[1] Higher religion, in fact, cannot by any shift find permanent place for the curse; but early society could make good use of it for its law and ethics. At last the parent's curse might be more or less moralised, and the higher moral sense could be reconciled to its power by the conviction that no natural parent would exercise it without grave cause. The whole commination system would gain in righteousness by transference from the nether deities to the divinities of heaven; and, occasionally, in regard to certain particulars this transference may have been attempted by the Greek imagination, and the righteous curse of the parents was taken up and executed by Plutarch's Zeus Γενέθλιος or Plato's high God. Yet the curse could never divest itself of the shadow of the infernal world, and modern society is inclined to leave it there.

[1] In the Euripidean legend, Poseidon was obliged to fulfil the curse on Hippolytos, though he must have known his innocence.

Finally, we may trace the influence of this domestic religion in one other institution of the old Greek society, the institution of slavery. Throughout the periods of its history, from the Homeric downward, we are struck with the comparatively kind treatment, often cordial and affectionate, which was meted out to the slave; and Hellenic households were in this respect honourably distinguished from the Roman. In the Homeric world the slave had indeed no rights, and might be casually killed by his master or mistress. But in Athens, by the fifth century, and probably in other states of Greece, the life and even the honour of the slave were safeguarded to some extent by law.[1] The affectionate temperament and warm susceptibilities of the Hellene must be reckoned with as causes here, but it is fairly certain that religion also did good work in this matter.

When the terrors and the power of the ghost-world had come to perturb the Greek imagination, as they did in the post-Homeric period, it was natural to believe that even a murdered slave might give rise to a vengeful and dangerous ghost, and this would give the whole community a motive for protecting his life by law; this surmise is strengthened by the clear evidence that purification from bloodshed was enjoined upon the slayer of a slave, for the fear of ghosts is deeply involved in these purifications.[2] At

[1] Eur., *Hec.*, 291; Isocr., *Or.*, 18. 52 (*cf.* Schol. Æschin., 2. 87), the slayer of a slave tried in the court ἐπὶ Παλλαδιῳ.

[2] *Cf.* Antiph., 6. 87; Plat., *Laws*, 865, *c. d.*

all events, we may believe that the domestic religion of the household did much to ameliorate his lot; for we know that he shared in the domestic rites, standing with the other members of the family round the altar of Zeus and partaking of the lustral water with them.[1] Thus, he was included within the area of the influence of Zeus Ἑρκεῖος,[2] and a certain vague religious sense would withhold the average householder from brutal maltreatment of him; and at the worst he had, like any stranger, a refuge at the altar of Zeus Ἱκέσιος, the suppliant god.[3] The Homeric slave, such as the pious Eumaios, performs certain family rites in the absence of his master. And later we find that the slave as a member of the family could frequent most of the public temples, except a few that were specially closed to him; certain others were even the exclusive privilege of slaves, when they enshrined cults that were taken over from a conquered population. We have fairly clear evidence that at Athens a Hellenic slave could even be initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries; for a fragment of a comic poet contains the words of a slave who remembers with gratitude his master's kindnesses towards him: "Who taught me my letters and got me initiated into the sacred mysteries."[4]

[1] Æsch., *Ag.*, 1037.

[2] It is noted by Isaios, *Or.*, 8, § 16, as an example of extreme punctiliousness, that a certain householder did not admit his slaves to the worship of Zeus Κτήσιος.

[3] As Euripides says: "The beast of the wild has the rock for his refuge, the slave has the altars of the gods," *Suppl.*, 267.

[4] Meineke, *Frag. Comic. Græc.*, vol. iii. p. 626.

Under the later empire a kindlier sentiment towards slaves might be inculcated by a world-religion that proclaimed the idea of human brotherhood. In the older civic societies, so far as religion could ameliorate his lot, it was rather the narrow religion of the family or the circle of kindred into which he was admitted as a humble dependant. But at one important point the religion of the State came to his aid, in assisting him to procure his own manumission. The slave who had saved his own price out of his allowance — and this was often possible—could lodge that sum in the temple of the chief god; the priests would use that money to purchase him from his master or mistress in the god's name; the god would then set him free and guarantee his freedom henceforth.[1] This does not mean that the religion proclaimed any ideal of human liberty; the process, which was very common at Delphi, is merely an example of an ingenious application of the mechanism of ritual and temple-law.

The records and citations given above are sufficient for illustration of the closeness with which the family-cults were interlaced with the family morality in the old Hellenic societies. But all the records are inadequate to express the depth and intensity of that family sentiment which these cults helped to engender, and of which the system of family duties was an outcome. Probably no people has ever felt with greater fervour the sacredness of the bond between brother and sister, parent and child, the rever-

[1] *Vide* my *Cults*, iv. 177–179.

ence due to the mother no less than to the father. A poet of the early fourth century wrote: "For those who have true knowledge of things divine, there is nothing greater than the mother";[1] the problem of the *Antigone*, a tragedy unique in the world's literature, is based on the duty of sister to brother and on the cult of Zeus the kinsman.

A full account of my present theme would demand some notice of the practices and rites connected with the cult or tendance of the ancestral spirit or departed member of the family, and the influence of these on household morality and sentiment as well as on higher religion. But this question demands a separate treatise. Those who study the facts with care will probably be inclined to rate that influence highly. They may arrive at the conviction that the meal round the family tomb, where the kinsmen join in fellowship with each other and with the dead, was one of the strongest religious bonds of family union; also "that the feeling of the divinity of ancestors quickened and intensified the feeling of the ancestral-paternal character of the high god."[2] Zeus himself becomes πατρῶος in the literal sense of "the divine ancestor"; or the human ancestor is merged in the high god, as we hear of Zeus-Agamemnon, Poseidon-Erechtheus.

The vitality of this religion of the family, assailed as it was by the later ethics and philosophy of individualism, remained till the extinction of paganism;

[1] Stob., *Florileg.*, 79. 13.
[2] *Hibbert Journ.*, 1909, p. 428.

and its moral tradition survived that extinction both in the Greek and Roman world, and has become a heritage for modern civilisation which will be maintained or discarded according to our destiny.

It remains to survey the higher manifestations of this religion of kindred in the wider organisations of "gens," tribe, and city.

Of most Greek communities it is true to say that the city was regarded as a corporation arising from an aggregation of tribes, that the tribes contained narrower subdivisions into clans, and that the family was a unit of the clan. The ordinary classical student is familiar with the classification into tribes, phratries, or subdivisions of the tribes, γένη, or the clans whose grouping constitutes a phratry. The many complex historical and constitutional questions that arise about these social arrangements do not concern us here, or they only interest us because we find that religion played the same integrating and consecrating part in respect of these as we have seen it play in regard to the smaller organism of the family. Again, we find that in these wider, as in the narrower, circles, the religious bond is cemented by the idea of kinship whether real or imaginary. As regards the Attic γένος we may believe that the tie of kinship, though regarded by the later writers as conventional only, was in early days real in some degree: the members were called, even in the later period, ὁμογάλακτες, "those who had been suckled at the same breast"; and these associations, when we come to know of them, have only a social-religious character, and their bond is the common

cult of their supposed ancestor, usually a hero but sometimes a god.[1] And of the other clans that we hear of in other parts of the Greek world the names are usually formed patronymically from some hero's name and suggest the same type of gentile cult. We find, too, that in Attica certain cults of the high gods of the State had been taken over from the family tradition of certain γένη, who retain the privilege of selecting their own members as priests for the whole city. In fact, so deeply interwoven was the ideal of kinship with the highest religion of Hellas that those were preferred for priests who could claim direct descent from the deity or hero whom they served; for in some inscriptions the priest boasts of his lineal connection with the god. This phenomenon in the Hellenic religion is parallel to the claim of apostolic descent in the Christian.

The larger group of the Φρατρία, the association of the "phratores," a system which was not confined to the Ionic States and had descended from the pre-Homeric period, was obviously artificial, yet was no less insistent on the theory of kinship or descent from a common ancestor as its bond of union. The Ionic name Apatouria, the gathering of the "Apatores," or those "who had the same father," points to this; as also does the fact that some of the Attic phratries had their own special cult of the Tritopatores, "the great-grandfathers"; and we find that the "phratores"

[1] It may be that the Attic γενέσια was a funeral feast consecrated to the ancestral spirits of the γένη, Herod., 4. 26; Bekker's *Anecdota*, 86. 20.

of the clan called Eumeleidai at Naples worshipped Eumelos as their "ancestral god."[1]

Furthermore, the idea of kinship was forcibly applied to groups of which the principle of grouping was obviously non-consanguineous but purely local or geographical. Even the Attic demes have their eponymous ancestors, worshipped with a cult of the gentile type; this is true also of the ten Attic tribes, all named from mythic heroic ancestors, whose statues stood near the council-chamber; and we have one illustration at least of their intimate association with the most ancient family religion, an inscription on an altar showing the common cult of Akamas, the hero-ancestor of the Akamantid tribe, with Zeus "Herkeios," the god of the household-garth.[2]

More interesting still is the religious history of such transparent fictions as the names of heroes and heroines who personify a mere geographical area, such as "Lakedaimon," "Messene," and many others. Some of these are by no means frigid inventions of the learning of later mythographers, but can be proved to be early products of the popular imagination. We might have supposed that such imagined forms as Lakedaimon or Zeus-Lakedaimon and Messene would have helped to free religion from the swathing-bands of the gentile concept. But this was by no means the case, for these shadow-personages of the territory were woven early into the genealogies of the leading families and are imagined as real ances-

[1] *Corp. Inscr. Græc.*, 5786.
[2] *Corp. Inscr. Attic.*, 2. 1664.

tors. After this we shall not be surprised to find that even the trade-guilds invent an ancestor, by whose cult the guild is held together. Thus, the guild of the Κεραμεῖς, "the Potters" at Athens, imagine an ancestor-hero, Κέραμος, "the Potter," in whose cult they unite. So powerful and so fruitful of social and religious results was the idea of kinship in the ancient Hellenic world.

We see, then, that the clan-system and the social groups of Hellas were organically connected with the cults of heroes and human ancestors real or imagined. But they were more closely consecrated to the high divinities, pre-eminently at Athens to Zeus, Athena, and Apollo, the chief powers of the Greek political world, but elsewhere—it might be—to Aphrodite or Poseidon. Hence arose the cults most important for the social and ethnic history of Greece, such as Zeus Φράτριος, Athena Φρατρία, or Ἀπατουρία, Apollo and Zeus Πατρῶος, the ancestor of the clan, or Poseidon Δωματίτης, the god "who builds the house," the pre-eminent ethnic deity of the Minyan stock.[1] The social function of such cults was to preserve the purity of the civic blood against alien admixture.

We note here an interesting contrast between the ancient Mediterranean and modern Christendom in respect of the law of marriage. Our religion has in theory no gentile prejudices, and favours marriages between aliens, but is strongly sensitive concerning

[1] *Vide* the interesting inscription concerning the Delphic phratry of the Labyadai in my *Cults*, iv. p. 28.

the laws of prohibited degrees. Hellenic society had indeed such laws, though less rigid than our own; but taking always the gentile point of view it favoured intermarriage between members of the same clan, in fact in certain circumstances compelled the nearest of kin to marry. On the other hand, it was most sensitive against marriage with aliens, prohibiting this severely unless a specially favoured and friendly State or alien individual had been granted the rights of intermarriage. This was logical and natural; for marriage implied a communion of worship, and the deities of kindred desire to have communion with none but the members of the kin. Hence these deities of the phratries and the clans, Zeus, Athena, Apollo, looked with jealous care to the legitimacy of the child and the purity of its parentage, when the father brought his boy or girl to the phratores and "gennetai," to enrol them on the register of phratry and "gens," so that they might rise to full civic status. The father must take an oath by the altar of Zeus Phratrios, and the phratores who adjudicated on each case must place their votes on the same altar before dropping them in the voting-urn. A heavy fine was inflicted for the wrongful introduction of an illegitimate child. The same ceremonies were prescribed for the adoption of a child, which was only legal if the phratores and Zeus Phratrios consented. At Troizen the maidens must dedicate their girdle to Athena Apatouria, the goddess of the clans, on the eve of their marriage; for the maidenhood of Athena did not detract from her

maternal interest in the legitimate increase of her people.[1]

It is interesting also to study the social and ethnic value of the cult of Apollo Πατρῶος at Athens, who was revered as the divine "ancestor" of the Attic clans. The son who had been newly presented to the phratores by the father must also be taken to the temple of Apollo Patroös, to communicate there with him.

The archon-elect was scrutinised before he could assume office; and one question was whether he possessed the worship of Zeus Herkeios and Apollo Patroös, and where their shrines were to which he had access.[2] The object was not to impose any dogmatic religious test, such as those to which candidates for office in modern times have been subjected, but to establish his legitimacy as full Attic citizen; the religion, so to speak, is in the blood of a certain stock, and is therefore proof of the purity of blood.

We find also a striking phrase in a speech of Demosthenes,[3] who makes the speaker call the members of his own gens the "clan-kinsmen of Zeus Herkeios and Apollo Patroös." Apollo, being the father of Ion, was the flesh-and-blood ancestor of the Ionic stock; and the non-Ionic clans of Attica had taken over his cult and the ancestral fiction from the Ionic. But Zeus was never imagined as the ancestor

[1] The old Mediterranean goddess Aphrodite had assumed the patronage of the phratries and the title Ἀπατούρη in some Ionic States; *vide* my *Cults*, vol. ii. p. 657.

[2] Aristot., *Athen. Polit.*, 55.

[3] *Or.*, 57, § 67.

of any branch of the Attic people; therefore the phrase "kinsmen of Zeus Herkeios" must possess a different sense from the other; it may express the feeling that those who have contact with the altar of a god establish a spiritual kinship with him. We notice also with interest that the γένος or clan borrows the cult and altar of the family-god, the god of the garth, in order to maintain the illusion that its members are of one flesh.

We have now to consider the constructive part played by Greek religion in the life and organisation of the city, the evolution of which was the highest achievement of the secular history of Greece.

We have reason to suppose that the very origin of the *polis* was in many cases religious. We have evidence that before the Homeric period the exclusive tribal-religious system had been transcended, and that certain tribes might share and maintain a common temple; for instance, the Delphic Amphiktyony had arisen before society had become predominatingly civic. The temple would be surrounded with sacrosanct ground, and this would serve as a rallying place for commerce and social union. Adjacent habitations could naturally arise, and the settlement could grow into a city, just as, in our early Middle Ages, a town might arise under the shadow of a monastery. The name "Preston" points to such an origin; and names of cities such as "Athenæ" the settlements of Athena, Alalkomenai the settlements of Athena Alalkomene, Potniai "of the mistress," Megara "the nether shrine of Demeter," indicate the same process of develop-

ment. In these cases the temple is the nucleus of the expanding community. But also when, as perhaps happened more frequently, secular motives such as military security prompted the foundation, the bond that holds the city together is none the less religious. And this civic religion is penetrated with the idea of kinship, the ruling idea of Greek polytheism. The city, with all its various and often heterogeneous elements, was regarded as one family; and it is important to note how much of the civic ritual is derived from the worship of the household. The cult of Zeus Ἑρκεῖος, as it had been adopted by the clans from the individual family, was also taken over by the "polis." We hear of his altar on the Acropolis of Athens in Athena's oldest temple;[1] at Olympia an altar of the same title was erected on the ruins of the house of the mythic ancestor Oinomaos.[2] As the family confirm the sentiment of consanguinity by partaking of the common meal, so we find in the ancient Attic feast of the Dipolia, the festival of Zeus the city-god, the type of a sacramental family-meal in which all the citizens partake of the sacred flesh of the sacrificed ox, and of which the legend, as preserved by Theophrastos, suggests that this partaking was in ancient times a condition of citizenship.[3]

Again, as each householder had his "holy hearth," so the city sanctified its "Hestia" in the Prytaneum

[1] Philochoros in Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Græcorum*, vol. i. p. 409, frag. 146.

[2] Paus., 5. 14. 7.

[3] *Cults*, vol. i. pp. 56–58, 88–91.

or town-hall, where usually the perpetual fire was maintained on which the continuous life of the State was imagined to depend; and there is some reason for supposing that this rite of fire-maintenance in the town-halls descended from the days of the heroic monarchies, when perpetual fires with similar ideas attaching were maintained in the kings' palaces.[1] In fact, the study of the Hestia-cults, as I have tried to show in my *Cults of the Greek States*, reveals more strikingly than any other evidence the organic association of the higher and broader religion of the State with the close and intimate religion of the family. Perhaps the most salient example of this is an archive of the State-ritual of Kos, in which the goddess Hestia appears to present a public sacrifice to Zeus, the city-god, on behalf of her householders.[2]

Again, we receive a similar impression when we note the anxious care and solemn organisation that the Greek State devotes to the family and gentile cults and tendance of ancestors. We know most about the Attic Anthesteria, a three-days festival, of which the last day, called the Day of Pots because of the pots or pitchers of cereal offerings consecrated to the dead, was purely an All-Souls' celebration. But we have the right to believe that the Greek communities generally had similar annual institutions. And in seasons of peril and anxiety, when a threatened State consulted the Delphic oracle, the response of the god would be likely to include an injunction to

[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. v. pp. 350–354.
[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. v. pp. 349–350.

maintain most zealously the traditional rites in honour of the ancestral spirits;[1] and a common form for the question of the consulting city to take was: "To what god or to what hero shall we sacrifice?" Moreover, as the family, the gens, and the phratry had respectively their guardian ancestral spirits, so there emerged in the haze of popular belief a common State-ancestor for the whole polis, often a heroic kinsman in the closest union with the chief State divinity.

We know what Erechtheus meant for the Athenians, the snake-limbed earth-man from whom they all claimed a shadowy descent, the fosterling of Athena whom she "set down in her rich shrine,"[2] and whom they placed so near to their high gods Zeus and Poseidon that the gods and the ancestor borrowed each other's names. We know what the Aiakidai meant for Ægina, the hero-ancestors by whose aid the battle of Salamis was won, whom the Athenians must propitiate before they ventured to attack the island,[3] and whose primal parent Aiakos was the high-priest of the "Hellenic" Zeus. Wherever the Locrians settled, the hero Aias Oileus was their unseen guardian, for whom they actually left a place in their ranks when they marched to battle.[4] Some of these ancestral cults enshrine the most transparent fictions: the worship of Ion at Athens; of the Phæacian Alkinoos at Corcyra, who shared the temenos of Zeus; the shadowy Phoroneus of Argos,

[1] *Cf.* the oracle quoted by Demosthenes, Πρὸς Μακαρτ. p. 1072.
[2] Hom., *Il.*, 2. 549.
[3] Herod., 5. 89.
[4] Conon, *Narrat.*, 18.

in whose memory a perpetual fire was kept burning. Yet these fictions easily passed in the popular imagination for ancient facts belonging to the history of the ancient kindreds whose union framed the State. And the Delphic oracle that lent its powerful influence to the maintaining and propagating such cults must have been aware of their social value for the morality of household, clan, and city. Moreover, many of these hero-worships made for political stability and the maintenance of the constitution and ancestral policy of the State. To detach Sikyon from her Argive associations Kleisthenes must drive out the spirit of Adrastos: before rejecting the Athenian in favour of the Lacedæmonian alliance, the men of Amphipolis must first disestablish the guardian-spirit of their Athenian founder Hagnon. The great legislators might be "heroised" after death: the spirit of Lykourgos watched over the constitution that he had framed and bequeathed: the founder of the city might be buried in the market-place, so that his influence might inspire the counsels of the State: the Megarians were advised by the oracle, at least according to their interpretation of it, to admit the spirits of the dead into their political counsels.[1]

Nevertheless, great as was the social and political value of these cults of hero-ancestors and human benefactors, they are overshadowed and absorbed in the religious systems of the "poleis," by the higher products of polytheism. It was not to any hero or mortal ancestor that the momentous cult-titles

[1] Paus., i., 43. 3.

Polieus or "Polias" were attached, but only to the highest divinities Zeus and Athena, pre-eminently political powers; and it was they above all others who inspired political wisdom, and who alone were worshipped as Βουλαῖοι, deities to whom the members of the council prayed and sacrificed before each meeting. Certain divinities, such as Athena and Apollo, must have acquired these political proclivities in pre-Homeric days.

We cannot always fathom the inner sentiment and beliefs of the average individual of so distant a past; but, looking at the outward acts and ceremonies recorded, we find a religion unique perhaps in the world for its almost naïvely intimate association with the whole political and social life of the people. The religious atmosphere is all-pervading: the law-courts and the market-places, the council-chamber and the town-hall are consecrated places and under the charge of certain deities. Important acts of State were accompanied by sacrifice; the religious oath was administered to magistrates, jurymen, and other officials; the admission of the youth into the ranks of citizens was a solemn religious ceremony, when the Ephebos swore to defend the land and the laws, not to disgrace his arms nor desert his comrade, in the names of Zeus, of the war-god, and of the ancient goddesses or nymphs of the soil.[1] The original union of the villages or the tribes into a single city-State, the most momentous event in the history of each community, would be commemorated

[1] Pollux, 8. 105.

by some religious festival, such as the Συνοικέσια at Athens, "the festival of the union of the houses," founded according to Thucydides by Theseus, the creator of united Attica, and consecrated to Athena. Or the national union would be consecrated and safeguarded by attaching some significant and potent title to the divinity whose concern it was: this may have been the function of Artemis Pamphylaia at Epidauros; this certainly was the significance of such titles as Zeus Pandemos and Aphrodite Pandemos; for the evidence clearly proves, as I have shown,[1] that this latter appellative does not allude to the goddess of common and venal love, but to the high political character of the Ionic goddess in whose name Theseus drew together all the "districts" into one State.

No doubt these legends often reflect historic facts important both for religion and politics. The incorporation of a small community into a larger State would naturally be accompanied by the transference of certain ἱερά, religious rites and services which would be regulated by treaty and contract. We have evidence, for instance, that the union of Eleusis and Eleutherai with Attica was effected partly by means of a religious charter regulating the administration of the mysteries and the worship of Dionysos Eleuthereus.

Greek religion, then, is absorbed in politics, especially at Athens, where occasionally even a partisan-colour is given to it, and the older Athenians may have tried to thwart Themistokles' democratic mari-

[1] Vide *Cults*, vol. ii. pp. 658–664.

time policy by the argument that it was likely to be displeasing to Athena, the ancient land-goddess.[1] Their late descendants dared to call her a democrat and to erect an altar to Athena "Demokratia,"[2] and no doubt it did not seem so naïve to the ancient world as it does to us, when a city of Asia Minor appointed Apollo as a magistrate for the year,[3] or when the late reactionary reformers of decaying Sparta appointed the ghost of Lykourgos as inspector of secondary education.[4] Even the orator's platform was thought worthy of the presence of Zeus, who took one of his cult-titles from it; so that Plutarch dares to call it "the common shrine of Zeus the counsellor and the city-god, of Themis and Justice."[5]

The outlook of these political cults is wide and at times even imperial, yet they do not at once carry the religion beyond the horizon of the old family worship. For the "polis," the union of the kindreds, was regarded in some sense as the family "writ large." And Plato expresses well the sentiment of his civic contemporaries when he dedicates the akropolis of his ideal State to Zeus Athena and Hestia,[6] as if the two great civic deities would naturally establish the new society around a family hearth.

The idea of the State as a family was still more vitalised in some communities by the belief that

[1] *Vide* Plut., *Vit. Themist.*, 19.
[2] *C. I. A.*, 2. 1672; *cf.* 3. 165.
[3] *Archäologische Anzeiger*, 1894, p. 124.
[4] *Annual of British School*, xiv. p. 112.
[5] Hesych., s.v. Ἐπιβήμιος; Plut., p. 819 E.
[6] *Laws*, p. 745 B.

one of the high deities was actually the aboriginal ancestor. There is no reason to doubt that this fiction occasionally represented for the popular mind a physical fact of early history; that at Athens Apollo was called Πατρῶος, "the ancestor," and at Delos Γενέτωρ, "the father," according to the natural flesh-and-blood significance of those terms. Athena only escaped being the physical ancestress of the Athenian people through the strength with which even in early times the dogma of her virginity was maintained, and the myth brought her as near as it dared to being the actual mother of Erechtheus, one of the mythic ancestors of the Athenians. Aphrodite was, through her daughter Harmonia, the ancestress of the Thebans, and therefore the Theban women pray movingly to her as "the first mother of the race, for from thy blood we are sprung."[1]

At times, however, the epithet Πατρῶος might be understood as expressing only the ideal and spiritual sense of divine fatherhood, or perhaps merely that the cult had come down from immemorial antiquity. The title in the local cults of Zeus does not always convey a belief in the physical descent of the worshippers from him; and certainly the Sicyonians who called Artemis Πατρώα could not have done such violence to the common Hellenic belief in her virginity as to have supposed that any of their kindred were literally descended from her: the appellative must merely have expressed the affectionate sense of kinship between the goddess and her people.

[1] Æsch., *Sept. c. Theb.*, 140.

LECTURE IV

INFLUENCE OF THE CIVIC SYSTEM OF RELIGION UPON RELIGIOUS THOUGHT, MORALITY, AND LAW

THIS prevailing atmosphere of the family that pervaded the city and the civic religion produced results of far-reaching importance both for religion and morality.

We may trace its working in the religious sphere first; and what is said of Greek society will be more or less true of the many other ancient and modern communities that have had or have the same system. It narrowed the religious horizon and the area of religious fellowship; for worship was regarded as the special privilege of a certain kin: ὑπὸ τῶν πολιτῶν πρέπει τιμᾶσθαι τοὺς θεούς ("it is (only) by citizens that the gods ought to be worshipped") is Aristotle's axiom that best expresses its spirit.[1] To such a religion the missionary impulse is entirely alien, and therefore this does not appear in Greek history until the Orphic propagandism grew powerful, ignoring the barriers of city and kin. In the many cases where the State absorbed alien elements of population with diverse cults, the fiction of kinship was likely to arise so as

[1] *Pol.*, 7. 9, p. 1329.

to satisfy the religious sense; or if a particular tribe was conquered and remained on in a servile status, the cult might be left in the hands of the slaves. Again, in communities such as the Greek "poleis" where the deities are pre-eminently citizens—even Boreas is called "citizen" at Thourioi—mixing intimately in the communal business and life, in the social amusements, artistic and athletic competitions, the religious temper was not so likely to be dominated by awe, or by a sense of the ineffable sublimity and infinite omnipotence of the godhead, as by a sense of the kindliness, neighbourliness, the good fellowship of the divine kinsmen. It was this that made possible both the licence of Aristophanes and at the same time the human and genial grandeur of the creations of Pheidias. This is the average truth, although here and there in Æschylus and Pindar we catch an echo of that more exalted tone which is familiar to us in Hebrew religious poetry, and which is now beginning to be heard from the ruins of Babylon. Further, the civic temper of religion does not easily lend itself to excesses of ecstasy or self-prostration, and both these are alien on the whole to the developed spirit of pure Hellenism. When ecstasy came to it, it came through the alien Dionysos; and at first this was mainly an ebullition of physical vitality; and Hellenic σωφροσύνη, the sober or "bourgeois" virtue that saves the State, was able to regulate it.

So far we are speaking of limitations, which may possess, however, certain negative advantages. We may also mark down to the old religious theory of

Hellas a positive advantage which was to reveal itself signally in the cosmopolitan religion of the future. The old-world civic cults quickened and deepened the consciousness of the kinship between the godhead and particular human groups. When the narrow barriers were broken, and the city was subsumed in a world-empire, this momentous idea, hitherto flowering in confined plots, could spread and germinate over the world: and a world-religion brought out the conception of a *Civitas Dei*, "the Citizenship of God," itself a spiritual emanation and development of the Græco-Roman Polis; and in this world-city all mankind have kinship with the divinity.

In Greek lands this idea was first proclaimed by Orphism, which seemingly has nothing to do with the civic system. But Orphism developed on the lines of the old Thraco-Phrygian religion, which no doubt contained the faith of mortal kinship with the divine, a faith probably assisted by a savage sacrament; and within this aboriginal religion we must suppose that this idea was local and particular.[1] A phrase in the *Axiochos*, a poor dialogue attributed to Plato, but written under the inspiration of late Orphism, is worth noting: the sick man is comforted concerning the destiny of his soul after death by the assurance that he is γεννητὴς τῶν θεῶν, "one of God's clan"; the words are mystic, but they are suggested

[1] We cannot suppose that when the rude Bithynians, near cousins of the Thraco-Phrygians, planted the cult of "God the Father" in Bithynia and Phrygia, they had in mind his universal fatherhood.

by the vocabulary of the old Attic clan and phratry system.

In the spheres of morality and law, concentric as they are in early society, we trace interesting results of the working of this civic-religious view. The human group that is held together by a religion based on the narrower concept of kinship tends to be governed by a morality that we call "clannish": the clan must hold itself responsible for its individual, and individualistic morality cannot yet come by its own. "The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children," a doctrine shocking to the modern ethical conscience, but natural and inevitable from the older point of view, which was that of tribal Israel and tribal Hellas. And the sin of an individual could bring a curse on his clan, which might pass through many generations; thus, even in the fifth century it was still possible to propose that Pericles should be banished from Athens because of his descent from that Megakles who, nearly two centuries before, had committed sacrilege against the Cylonian suppliants.

Again, from this clan-morality, based on the sense of the unity of life animating the whole group, arises the idea of the moral justification of vicarious punishment; thus, it becomes just under certain conditions to put hostages to death; the modern savage, in prosecuting the blood-feud, is content, if he cannot slay the actual slayer, with taking the life of one of his tribesmen; Hammurabi, the earliest legislator of civilised Babylon, condemns a man's son to death in a special case for his father's fault; the Spartans in

the fifth century invite volunteers to go to the Persian king and die at his hands in atonement for the city's outrage on the Persian heralds, and two patriots offer themselves to set free the whole city from guilt.[1] If we examine the details of advanced Attic law concerning homicide, we shall discern lingering traces of the old clan-morality, the communal responsibility of the group.

But it has lingered longest in religion, which more than any other part of the mental life of man conserves and adapts the materials of ancient sentiment. We recognise it in the formulæ of the curse invoked by the city on wrong-doers or by the individual on himself: "May he and his descendants come to a miserable end," is the most usually recurring phrase. But we recognise it most clearly in one most important manifestation—in the religious theory of vicarious piacular sacrifice, the sacrifice of a human or animal life for the community. For the true moral appreciation of this we must distinguish it from the scapegoat ceremonies,[2] which are logically nothing more than a magic transference of sin into the body of the man or the animal that is then driven away into the wilderness and not necessarily put to death. Of vicarious sacrifice proper there are two piacular types: one that is wholly non-moral, in which the life offered is that of an alien or of a little-valued

[1] Herod., 7. 134.

[2] This does not appear to be realised with sufficient clearness in Dr Frazer's long and interesting record of such ceremonies, *Golden Bough*,[2] vol. iii. pp. 93–134.

animal, and such a rite seems to rest ultimately on the savage idea that the offended deity demands blood and is indifferent as to the quality of the blood that he receives; the other is the higher type that alone concerns us here, in which, when the people have sinned, a valued life is offered for an atonement which may be efficacious in the eyes of a morally vindictive deity, because the life is closely akin to the life of the community, so that according to the communal view all die and atone through the death of their representative kinsman. This is the inward meaning of the Greek legends concerning the voluntary self-immolation of the king's son or daughter, a noble youth or noble maiden; the nobler the kindred of the victim, the stronger is the tie that links it to the community and the more potent is the efficacy of this communal atonement—most potent when the victim offers himself or herself of free-will. Or if the victim be an animal, it may be possible by a fiction to identify the animal with the life of the community: thus, in the legend of the piacular sacrifice to Artemis of Brauron in Attica, the father offered a goat but called it his daughter.

This higher type of vicarious sacrifice is a heritage bequeathed to the higher religions from the older stage of communal ethics and psychology, and has never been reconciled with the more advanced theories of individual responsibility.

A few other examples are worth noting of the influence of the family-religion of the city upon average Hellenic morality. Their close association

leads at once to this, that family-duty and State-duty could not be imagined to clash; celibacy was unpatriotic; the best citizen was the married man with children, he could best speak to the enemy in the gate; the words of an Attic comedian of the fourth century, Timokles, quoted by Stobæus, reveal the same ethical point of view: "He who fears and reverences his father is reasonably the good citizen, and is able to do most harm to the enemies of the State."[1] For the same reason, as we have seen, the State-theory concerning sexual morality looked only to the preservation of the monogamic marriage and the rearing of healthy children; it could not recognise any abstract value in barren chastity, except rarely for religious purposes; and the gulf between ancient and modern morality in this respect is well illustrated by those stories that ascribe to Solon the public organisation of courtesans and impute to the austere Cato an approval of such a system as a safeguard against the danger of adultery in the family.

It would be a long and laborious task to track out the varied relations between the religion and the philosophic ethic of Greece: the correlation is most discernible in the moral writings of Plato; most difficult to trace in the *Ethics* of Aristotle, which is the first great secular treatise on the subject and is for the most part constructed without any obvious religious idea; yet as Kant's *Ethics* reflects unmistakably the traits of Protestantism and of the Old Testament, so the bright and human philosophy of the

[1] *Florileg.*, ed. Meineke, vol. iii. p. 83.

Greek thinker, wherein social virtues and social graces are happily blent in his civic ideal, is toned by the atmosphere of the religion of the Greek Polis, that fellowship of families and kindreds.

We may now consider some salient examples of the consecration by religion of the higher civic life and morality. The primary public duty was to defend the city's hearths and temples; and we may suppose that to fight for Athens was to fight for Athene, if at least we can trust a text in a drama of Euripides, a phrase more virile and of stronger pitch than most of his verses: "O sons of Athens! if ye cannot stay this stubborn spear of the men sprung from the dragon's teeth, the cause of Pallas is overthrown":[1] it is thus that Theseus encourages his men in the great battle against the Thebans. The θεοὶ πατρῶοι were remembered in Nikias' passionate exhortations before the last agony in the harbour of Syracuse, and the religious appeal doubtless came home to his followers. In the Babylonian religion the connection between the deity and his temple was so intimate that if the enemy destroyed his temple or city, the deity appears sometimes to have been imagined as losing all powers and flitting impotently away like a bird to the sky. Now, the divinities of Greek polytheism are too robust and enduring to fear such extinction, nor is their life and power regarded as depending wholly on their favourite temple or State, partly because each of them—as soon as we come to know them at all—is found worshipped

[1] *Supplices*, 711.

by more communities than one. Yet Athena suffers with the sufferings of her citizens and intercedes with Zeus to avert their ruin.

Neither in Greek ethics nor Greek religion can we say that courage apart from its patriotic exercise on the battlefield receives any recognition; and Aristotle's very narrow definition of it is justified in his civic theory of morality. As regards religion, it is not easy to find either in cult-record or religious literature any direct consecration of this particular virtue. Homer might describe the brave man as dear to Ares, but Ares was not dear to the Greeks, personifying as he did only the Berserker-rage of battle, which was a temper of mind always uncongenial to the average Hellene. Nor can we discover any morality at all in the worship of Ares. It is otherwise with Athena: she stood for the ideal of tempered and disciplined courage devoted to patriotic ends; the dying savagery of Tydeus—who fastened his teeth in the skull of his enemy, as does the revengeful spirit in Dante's *Inferno*—disgusts her, and she withdraws from him the boon of immortality which she had promised him as a reward for his lifelong valour. The story comes from the post-Homeric epic, but we can find at least one passage in Homer's poems expressing the belief that well-tempered bravery wins her regard: in the battle against the Suitors she only gives the victory to Odysseus and his son when they have satisfied her in the test of valour. But the closest association of this virtue with religion was attained by the practice

of awarding heroic honours to the patriot who fought and died bravely for his country. Apart from the cults of mythic heroes, we find this practice of rare occurrence, and the earliest examples of it not earlier than the fifth century B.C. The Greeks who fell at Platæa and Marathon received heroic honours *en masse*; and a few at least of the bravest of the three hundred Spartans at Thermopylæ. We have had strong proof from Japan of the social value of ancestor-worship and of the ennobling of the dead; and we need not doubt that the prospect of such posthumous honours would make the strongest appeal to the self-love of the Hellene and would afford a powerful motive to conduct.

With patriotism was linked the ideal of freedom or the immunity of the city and the individual from alien control. Its realisation did not so much constitute a special virtue as create an atmosphere in which alone all virtue, moral and intellectual, could breathe and live. This idea, to which Homer first gave voice,[1] remained in full vigour till the civic system began to decay, when the free-thinkers and the philosophers came at last to admit the possibility of virtue in a slave.[2] The religious consecration of this noble civic passion was the cult of Zeus Eleutherios, of which we have early record in an archaic inscription of Laconia, but which received its chief

[1] "Zeus takes away the half of a man's virtue, when the day of slavery befalls him": *Od.*, 17. 322.

[2] A fragment of Euripides' play *Melanippe* (Dind., 514, 515) is an early example of the more liberal thought.

stimulus from the Hellenic victories over Persia. Simonides is our witness: "Having driven out the Persian, they raised an altar to Zeus the Free, the glorious token of Hellenic freedom." The same cult was often instituted to commemorate deliverance from domestic tyranny. Have we here merely an example of the eager, self-inspired spirit of the Hellene, who imputes instantly to his deity a sympathy with his strongest passion? Even if this were the whole account of it, we would not therefore regard such cults as mere religious fictions, coldly commemorative of facts that had happened and things that had been achieved. The Greek even of the fifth century was quick to believe that any overmastering emotion—such as sex-love, or the love of liberty, or the feeling of pity—drew its life from some divine source; the theistic expression of this belief would be such cults as Zeus Eleutherios, a daimonistic expression would be the worship of Autonomia or Eleutheria itself, which we occasionally find. But there was more in the cult that we are considering than the mere consecration of the Greek passion for freedom. We read that a necessary religious act after the expulsion of the defeated barbarian from the soil of Greece was the purification of the temples that they had polluted; and that for this purpose sacred fire was fetched hurriedly from Delphi. Wherein did the pollution consist? The deliberate destruction and desecration of the Akropolis of Athens was an exceptional act of policy on the part of the Persians; but they did not behave thus to other temples, nor

was it consonant with their religious principles to do so ordinarily. The Greeks, then, must have felt that their holy places were naturally polluted by the mere presence of the barbaric host in or about them; and this was a feeling proper to the tribal and family theory of religion, which logically carries with it the exclusion of the alien. Therefore such cults as that of Zeus the Free were suggested by an essential religious principle; and the morality of patriotism drew from a religious source.

In one centre of this cult[1] we find the goddess Ὁμόνοια, the goddess of civic concord and fellowship, associated with Zeus; and it is interesting to observe the various ways in which religion was able to foster and safeguard that most essential virtue of the civic life, the harmony of the citizens, whereby the blood-feud that was wont to rage between the independent clans might be banished from the circle of the city. In fact, the relation between Greek religion and law and morality can nowhere be so fruitfully studied as in tracing out the records of Hellenic law and sentiment concerning murder. And in the history of no other society, so far as I am aware, can we follow out so clearly the evolution of a quasi-secular criminal law from religious sources. I have given elsewhere[2] an exposition of this; but I may here restate what appear to be the leading factors in the development of the Greek law of homicide.

A glance at the enactments concerning this vital

[1] Thebes, *C. I. G.*, 1624.

[2] *Evolution of Religion*, pp. 139–152.

matter in civilised Athens of the fourth century reveals a deep religious colouring; and doubtless we should find the same in the codes of the other States, if we knew them so well. To understand this, we must be able to penetrate far back into the ancient days of Greece, at least as far as Homer. His poems present us with a society that has advanced far indeed beyond the merely tribal stage, but that is still dominated, more strongly than the later commonwealths, by the old clan-morality. For him and his contemporaries murder might be a sin, but could never be a crime, that is, a wrong committed against the State for which the State itself would take vengeance. It might be a sin to slay a herald, because the herald bore the protecting badge of Hermes; it was a sin to slay a suppliant, because the suppliant was in touch with the hearth-goddess or with Zeus the guardian of strangers; it was doubtless a heinous sin to slay a kinsman, an act that awakened the wrath of the Erinyes and of the gods of kinship. The ancient legends are more explicit on this point than any clear words of Homer, who mentions three cases only: the parricide of Œdipus,[1] and his persecution by the Erinyes without any allusion to his expulsion from Thebes; the story of Epeigeus, who slew his cousin and fled as a suppliant —perhaps for purification—to Peleus and Thetis;[2] and finally the deed of Thepolemos, who deliberately slew his cousin and whom his own kinsmen intended to put to death.[3] It is doubtful if this would be the

[1] *Od.*, 11. 273. [2] *Il.*, 16. 571. [3] *Il.*, 2. 665.

usual punishment in Homeric times, as the kin would thus commit the same grievous act of shedding kindred blood: and Plutarch tells us that actually in his own time in Bœotia the slayer of a kinsman was not put to death but driven into perpetual exile. And this seems to have been the case in regard to Bellerophon, who accidentally slew his brother, of whom Homer vaguely says: "He wandered about the Aleian plains, eating his own soul."[1] The slayer of his kin flies from society, with a curse upon him, of which the Erinyes are the personal expression. This is a curious example of the punishments of conscience being earlier than the punishments of law; and this is not the modern conscience of civilised man, but the tribal or family conscience that thrills with mysterious horror at the shedding of kindred blood, but is not at all stirred by the ordinary slaying of an alien; which in Homeric and many other early societies is neither a sin against the gods nor a crime against any State, but only means a serious affair with the alien's kinsmen, the blood-feud or the composition by the were-gild.

The sacredness of kindred life was closely associated in Greek societies with the cult of Zeus Meilichios; the god whose wrath the sinner who has slain his kinsman must avert, and who therefore in that optimistic faith natural to early prayer is called "the merciful," though his rites were gloomy. There is no reference to such a god, nor clearly to such a religious idea, in the Homeric poems; yet in

[1] *Il.*, 6. 200.

the records and legends about him there is much that has an air of great antiquity, and we shall not easily believe that the Greek conscience, brooding on this heinous matter, found no religious expression till the post-Homeric period. But it seems to have been in this period and not earlier that that momentous advance to a wider conception of the sin of murder was made, whereby the whole free life within the city was safeguarded by the sense of the sacredness of kindred blood. Theoklymenos in the *Odyssey*, who has slain a member of his own society—*ἄνδρα κατακτὰς ἔμφυλον*—had merely to fear the ordinary blood-feud of the kinsmen, and is welcomed by Telemachos without scruple as a desirable companion.[1] But later the happy fiction that the various tribes and clans aggregated in the Polis were ultimately of kindred stock did signal service here; so that the slaying of any citizen became regarded as the shedding of kinsman's blood; the first testimony to this advanced thought is found in the poem called the *Aithiopis* by Arktinos of Miletus: Achilles, who slays the worthless Thersites —no blood-relation of his, but still a member of the same large community—has to retire from the army for a while, to be purified by Apollo in Lesbos; the atonement is not yet secular, but religious merely; at the same time it attests a deeper sense than had hitherto prevailed of the sacredness of life within the civic area. And henceforth any civic bloodshed is an offence against Zeus Meilichios; it is he

[1] *Od.*, 13. 272.

to whom the Argives in the fifth century, weary of civic massacre, atone with cult and statue.

Another religious—or, at least, supernatural—force that must be reckoned with in any account of the progress of Hellenic morality and law in this vital social interest, the sanctity of human life, is the reverence for the departed spirit, the fear of the wrath of the ghost, the conviction of the supernatural power of the dead. This sentiment, combined often with actual cult of the dead, I believe to be pre-Homeric; half-ignored, perhaps disliked, by Homer, it asserts itself as a strong and constructive social force in the post-Homeric Greek communities. The anger of the ghost of the slain becomes a danger to the whole community among whom the slayer resides; and this idea is independent of the narrow limitations of the old morality of clan or tribe; the ghost of any citizen, or even of a resident alien, becomes a local peril to the living; therefore society will begin to feel indignant at the slaying even of an alien, and then to make it punishable by law. To this lower religious sense rather than to the stimulus of higher theistic religion I would attribute the great achievement of Attic law, the protection of the life of the slave, which by the fifth century, if not earlier, had become legally safeguarded. And it is to this motive that the orators appeal when they address an Attic jury on a case of homicide; endeavouring at times to secure a verdict against the accused by threatening them with the wrath of the ghost if they acquit

him.[1] One of the most interesting examples of the working of this belief is provided by the closing scene of Euripides' *Hippolytos*: the dying hero forgives his father Theseus, and absolves him from the stain of his death that the latter had unwittingly caused; the father bursts out into expressions of admiration, gratitude, and delight which our modern sentiment misunderstands. How can his dying son absolve him from stain? It is really on behalf of his ghost that Hippolytos makes this promise: the ghost shall in this case forgive, shall not haunt his father nor drive him from the land.

But ghosts were mainly vindictive and unforgiving; it was they who were responsible for much that was inequitable and uncouth in the Attic code concerning accidental homicide; the person who slew another unintentionally and quite innocently must yet flee from the land for a season till the kinsmen forgave, and could persuade the ghost to cease from troubling. Therefore ghost-fear and ghost-cult, while intensifying the sanctity of human life, might act as a barrier against progress towards a more equitable law.

Here the higher religion came to aid: it consecrated the awakening moral sense that motives, intention, and circumstances qualify a moral action, that not all man-slaying is equally guilty, that justifying and extenuating facts may be pleaded. Such cults as that of Athena Ἀξιόποινος,[2] the goddess of righteous

[1] *Cf.* Antiphon, *Tetral.*, i. 3. 10.

[2] In Sparta associated with a legend of justifiable homicide, the slaying of Hippokoon and his sons by Herakles (Pausan., iii. 15. 6).

homicide, such cult-legends as those associated with the Attic law-courts, ἐπὶ Παλλαδίῳ, named after Pallas' statue, ἐπὶ Δελφινίῳ, named after Apollo Delphinios, where pleas of accidental and justifiable homicide were respectively tried, show Greek religion sanctioning, if not evoking, a higher morality and a higher law concerning murder. I have suggested elsewhere,[1] and the suggestion still seems to me reasonable, that religion was able to render this aid indirectly through the growing demand that was heard louder in the later centuries for purification from all bloodshed, however the taint was incurred. The Apolline worship becomes the main medium of purification; but the Apolline priesthood might grant or refuse this service, whereby alone the homicide could regain his place in society, according to the circumstances of the slaying; but such power would not be likely to remain long in their hands, and local courts would be established to try the circumstances. The secular claim of the State begins to be heard, and yet the State-courts that tried this offence retain the deep imprint of religion.

This advance that we have been considering marks an inestimable gain for equity and ethics; and it was associated by certain links with the worships of Zeus, Athena, and Apollo. We can dimly surmise that the old chthonian religion was long adverse to it; the realm of the earth-spirits and the ghosts cherished rather the grim vindictiveness of the old clan-morality that acknowledges no plea, and the atmosphere of this

[1] *Evolution of Religion*, p. 144; *Cults*, vol. iv. p. 298, etc.

dark world was not favourable to the seeds of social progress. Though the black goddesses of vengeance might here and there be imagined to turn white,[1] yet such powers were "hard to reconcile." Themis, originally the double of the earth-goddess, must be detached from Ge and attached to Zeus or Athena, before she could stand as the religious impersonation of righteous law according to the higher standard of civilised Greece. The great Æschylean drama of the trial of Orestes presents the Erinyes as the representatives of the lower morality of blind vengeance as against the higher that admits the plea of right and justification.

On the other hand, we discern here, as in many other examples, with what pliancy and lightness the brighter religion of Hellas, which by contrast is sometimes called Olympian, adapted itself to the changing needs of an advancing society.

[1] Paus., viii. 34. 1–2.

LECTURE V

NATIONAL AND HUMANITARIAN RELIGION

So far we have been dealing with the phenomena of a religion which, though capable of responding to the higher moral aspirations and needs of an advancing society, yet appears narrow in its extension and straitened in its ideals by the limits of the city area and of the society founded on the idea of clan-kinship. If this is indeed the whole account of it, it must seem a paradox to us who consider that humanism is the special product of the Hellenic spirit. And it is, in fact, by no means the whole account. Students are familiar with the fact that in the last centuries of Hellenic and Græco-Roman history, Greek philosophy and the Roman imperial power had engendered and fostered a cosmopolitan ethic and a theory of the spiritual freedom of mankind, so that the harvest was ripe for the new world-religion to reap. But it is less generally known and admitted that the seeds were already germinating in the remotely earlier periods of Greek thought and religion.

The religion of the Homeric poems is not merely

tribal, not even merely civic. The high god and some of those beneath him are recognised by all the different tribes, even by the alien races of Asia Minor. Zeus has, in fact, almost the status of a world-deity, and his name becomes at times a synonym for Θεός, a vaguer designation of universal godhead; and many of Homer's religious utterances could be adapted to a world-religion. His constant appellative of Zeus, *πατὴρ ἀνδρων τε θεῶν τε*, "the father of gods and men," was certainly not interpreted in a physical or literal sense. It is true that in another passage the swineherd Eumaios, the highest type of Homeric piety, laments that "Zeus doth not pity men after that he hath brought them to the birth."[1] But neither in Homer nor in Hesiod nor in early Greek literature generally can we find any theological dogma concerning the divine physical origin of man. The phrase quoted above must be interpreted in a spiritual sense, and it reveals to us the religious phenomenon that is observable in many other societies, primitive and advanced, that have evolved the belief in personal deities; the relations between men and the high god are expressed in emotional terms borrowed from human kinship. But the Homeric phrase has this further interest, that it implies that this loving relationship unites all men, and even the other gods, to Zeus.

Is this broad view peculiar to the great poetic thinkers of this early age, or does it accord with certain facts of the popular religion? The numerous

[1] *Od.*, 20. 201.

appellatives and invocations of the divinities which appear to descend from an ancient period, whenever they seem to bear a local or ethnic sense, generally reveal the ancient tribal spirit and the narrowness of the small community. But the most interesting of these is Ὀλύμπιος, and the history of its diffusion, if we could trace it with certainty, might disclose a certain force making for unity within the religion. The epithet doubtless arose in the earliest period of the Hellenic migrations from the north, when certain tribes were settled in the north of Thessaly in the neighbourhood of Olympos. But by the time of Homer, as the poems are witnesses, it had lost its local significance and had become, we may almost say, a Panhellenic invocation of the supreme god, and we may also believe that it had penetrated at an early date as an actual cult-name into the worship of several cities that were far distant from the northern "Mount of God." Thus at Athens the cult of Zeus Olympios was associated with a dim legend concerning the North-Greek hero Deukalion.

The title, however, which in the later historic period best expressed the ideal of a united Greece, an ideal realised to some extent by its religion, but never by its politics, was that of Zeus Panhellenios. The history of this appellative coincides with the history of the term Hellen. We know that this was originally a name of a tribe or group of tribes settled in or near the Thessalian Phthia; that their ancestral heroes were the Aiakidai, Aiakos, Telamon, Peleus, Achilles; and that, according to the legend, a branch

of this people settled in Ægina. The legend enshrines a fact of early migration, for in Ægina we find later the immemorial cult of Zeus Ἑλλάνιος, with Aiakos as his high priest. Perhaps by the seventh century the name "Hellen" had passed from the tribal into the national significance; and not much later, we must suppose, the name Zeus Ἑλλάνιος was enlarged into "Pan-hellanios," the title of "the God of all the Hellenes." The cult became prominent, thanks to the patriotism of the Æginetans and the miraculous assistance given at Salamis by the Aiakidai, in the period of the Persian invasion, when in their hour of greatest need the Greek communities strove to become united. And the Athenians, hard pressed by the Persians, swear to the Spartans that they will not be false to Zeus Panhellanios and the cause of Hellas. But it seems that at some earlier period than this the Megarians were aware of the cult and of the legend that the good priest-king, Aiakos, had ascended a mountain in their vicinity and had prayed there on behalf of all Greece to Zeus Panhellanios for the salvation of the peoples in a season of drought,[1] just as Delphi is said by Pindar to have sacrificed "for fair Pan-Hellas" at a similar crisis.[2]

Parallel with such a potentially national cult were developed genealogical fictions, such as Hellen and the sons of Hellen, the "eponyms" of the leading stocks, fictions of some value for the religious sense of kinship and the growing consciousness of nationalism.

[1] Paus., i. 44. 9.

[2] *Pæans*, 6. 62.

This sense of fellowship, which rested also on community of speech and social usages, was fostered in various ways by religion, even in the times before what we call history begins. In this respect the influence of the great national games of Greece has been generally appreciated. The origin of these was in all cases partly religious, being consecrated to some hero or higher deity—Zeus, Apollo, Poseidon. Men from various and possibly hostile tribes might come together to witness or partake in the contests, and to join in the local worship which established a temporary holy truce or "peace of god," nor do we ever hear of these great gatherings being disturbed by discord or bloodshed. The institution of the Olympic games was of remote antiquity, and doubtless they contributed something to the gradual emergence of the idea of a Panhellenic Zeus. This was consecrated by the world-masterpiece of Pheidias, the great statue of the god in gold and ivory set up in the Olympian temple in the fifth century, which a later writer[1] describes as the image of a deity "mild and peaceful, the god of a Hellas living in concord with itself."

Of equal importance for the possibility of national union were the early Amphiktyones, or organisations of different tribes and peoples for the protection and management of some common temple; and before the idea of such a policy could have arisen, religion must have overpassed the narrow tribal stage. The salient and most interesting example of such an Amphiktyony, a word which properly signifies "the

[1] Dio Chrysost., *Or.*, 12, p. 412 R.

union of the peoples who dwell around a temple," was the Delphic. What were the political conditions that facilitated this union is a question that does not concern us. What suggested to these Amphiktyones, who were originally organised to protect a temple of Demeter near Thermopylæ, to concern themselves with Delphi, was the growth of the oracle to a position of international importance, and to this position it must have begun to approach in the Homeric or pre-Homeric period. For the list of the various members of the league reflects the ethnic conditions of an age prior to the Ionic migrations and the Dorian conquest of the Peloponnese, an age also when the ἔθνος or tribe rather than the Polis was the dominating factor of society.[1] The oath taken by the members, preserved by Æschines, bound them "not to destroy any city of the league, not to cut any one of them off from spring-water, either in war or peace, and to war against any who violated these rules." The oath may have been broken, and Demosthenes might speak slightingly of "the Delphic shadow"; but the text, which has the ring of genuine antiquity, is a priceless document of Greek social-religious history, for it proclaimed, however falteringly, the ideal of an intertribal morality and concord. On a large scale this was never realised in the tragic history of Greece; nevertheless the unrealised aspirations of any religion retain their value.

The whole history of the Delphic oracle much concerns our present interest. I have dealt with it in some

[1] *Vide* my *Cults*, vol. iv. pp. 182–185.

fullness elsewhere,[1] and can here only glance at its main effects. Certain legends pointedly suggest that it had assisted the Doric migration into the Peloponnese; and at least from the eighth century onwards it is the most potent Panhellenic force in Greek religious institutions. It directed the counsels of States, and had at times the opportunity of inspiring their legislation; it fostered and aided by invaluable advice the expanding colonisation of Greece, and was able thereby to bind the new colonies by indissoluble ties to Delphi. It might claim even to dispose of territory. In religious matters its influence was of the greatest, and it helped to diffuse a general system of purification from bloodshed; and when after the fifth century its political authority waned, it served in some sort as a confessional whereto troubled and conscience-stricken minds might resort. The records almost, in fact, suggest an ambition on the part of Delphi to play the same part in relation to the Greek cities as the mediæval papacy played in relation to the States of Christendom. But an ecclesiastic domination was rendered impossible in Greece, partly by the absence of genius at Delphi, but mainly by the stubborn independence and centrifugal instincts of the Greek Polis. Finally, we may note one historic fact in the history of Delphi, that may have been of importance for the expansion of the horizon of Greek religion. In the seventh and sixth centuries a great non-Hellenic power, the monarchy of Lydia, is found to be consulting and courting the

[1] Vide *Cults*, vol. iv. pp. 179–218.

favour of the Delphic Apollo. An impulse was thus given to the birth of an idea that the sphere of godhead was not limited to the tribe, not even to the nation in our sense of the word, but might embrace all mankind. But it was not till a later period that Greek thought showed itself wholly free to make this momentous advance.

It is true to say, then, that at no epoch of Greek society that we can yet discover was Greek religion wholly confined within the bonds of clan, tribe, or city. Nor does it appear at any time to have been true of Greek morality that its outlook was limited to the circle of kindred and did not include the alien and stranger. One of the clearest proofs of this is the great antiquity of the ritual of oath-taking and of the moral feeling about perjury as a primary sin against the divinity in whose name a person was forsworn. The ancient religious ceremony of the oath has a peculiar interest on two grounds: first, it was a form of communion between the oath-taker and the divine power invoked; for, as more than one passage in the Homeric poems and the record of the old Attic ritual in the Court of the Areopagus attest, the person at the moment of swearing put himself into touch or *rapport* with some object that established a mystical current between himself and the divinity, and perhaps in the most primitive stage of thought the curse set in motion by perjury, as in the ordeal, was spontaneously destructive or blasting; later this idea would pass into the higher theistic thought that the wrath of a righteous god was

awakened by it. Secondly, in this religious act, and perhaps in this alone, the status of the contracting parties was not considered at all; an oath sworn to an alien or even a slave was as binding as one sworn to a kinsman or a tribesman, according to the religious logic of the ceremony. And the public oath taken between alien tribes, or houses, or communities was no doubt of as great antiquity as the private between individuals. The morality that was associated with it was never bound by the limitations of kinship and community of status: thus it quickened the sense that the deity punished wrongs committed against aliens, at least under certain conditions.

We here see religion originating a great principle of international law, the sanctity of treaties and of pledges given to the alien. We may discern it also operative in the same sphere, at the dawn of Greek society, by investing the person of the herald or ambassador with an inviolable sanctity. The herald bore the κηρύκειον, the badge of Hermes, and thus he could pass safely through hostile lands; for injury done to him would be, as Plato asseverates,[1] sacrilege against Zeus and Hermes; and we discover the same principle at work in the religious law of early Rome. Thus it was that religion was able to win recognition for one of the most enduring ideas of international ethics. How strong was the hold of this law on the conscience of Greece in the fifth century is well attested by the story in Herodotus[2] of the divine punishment that

[1] *Laws*, p. 941 A.

[2] 7. 134.

befell the Spartans for the slaughter of the Persian heralds.

There were other ways in which religion could assist the growth of a morality that transcended the ancient limitations of the kinship-groups. The curse-power embodied in the personal Ἀρά or Erinys was an immemorial weapon of the wronged, and might be imagined as no respecter of persons. Practically, this was not wholly true: those of greater authority, the father and mother or elder brother of the household, the ruler of the tribe or State, were believed to possess the greater power of the curse; and we have noted already the significance of the words, "Thou knowest that the Erinyes ever follow the lead of the elder born." Yet Homer himself conceives the possibility that the Erinyes might hearken to the curse of the lowly, and even a beggar might, if wronged, arouse them.[1] The later religious literature occasionally associates the Erinyes with a vague moral supervision of mankind. In the vision of Sophocles, as we have seen, they are powers that have an eye over all the sufferings of men. But this provident care belonged in the later religion not to these ancient curse-spirits but to the high god, and the curse becomes moralised as the prayer. Already in Homer the idea is clearly expressed that God listens to the prayers of all who are aggrieved, regardless of status or race: in the famous speech of Phoinix, the prayers are "the daughters of Zeus. They bring great blessings to him who reverences them; but if a man ruthlessly

[1] *Od.*, 17. 475.

repel them, they mount to the throne of God and appeal against that man, that bane may come to him."[1]

In early society, public morality mainly follows the lead of religion; and such religious utterances as these could gradually quicken a public conscience that would reprobate wrongs done to aliens and to those of no political rights, whom no State-law or tribunal could protect. We cannot give the date of this momentous first step towards a world-morality. We have seen the germs of it in Homer; but we would like to know more exactly when, for instance, the idea began to permeate the average conscience of the Greek community that the slaying of an unprotected and harmless alien was a sin against God and a crime against the society within whose borders he was slain. Doubtless it was felt as a sin and excited "nemesis," or moral indignation, before any public law made it penal; for of this latter stage in the history of ethics our first record is as late as the fourth century. I have suggested above, that the stronger sense in the post-Homeric society of the terrors of the ghost-world might have assisted the establishment of a law against the slaying of aliens. But long before this the cult of Zeus "Xenios," the god who protects the stranger and the wanderer, an ancient cult attested by the Homeric poems, had done all that religion could do to expand the moral feelings of the tribe beyond the tribal limits.[2] In

[1] *Il.*, 9. 508.

[2] *Od.*, 14. 57: πρὸς γὰρ Διός εἰσιν ἅπαντες ξεῖνοί τε πτωχοί τε; *Od.*, 14. 283: Διὸς δ' ὠπίζετο μῆνιν Ξεινίου.

the better minds, doubtless, the moral conscience responded; in fact, an awakening moral sympathy with the stranger may have assisted in engendering the cult. The average moral and religious feeling of Homer's society may be illustrated by the ironical words of the good swineherd Eumaios: "Truly with a cheerful heart should I proffer my prayers to Zeus, were I to slay the stranger whom I had received in my hut."[1] In fact, Homer anticipates the view of the later humane society and ethic of Greece, the view expressed, for instance, by Plato in a striking passage of the *Laws*,[2] where he speaks of the friendless stranger as of all objects the most pity-moving in the eyes of gods and men, and of wrongs done to him as sacrilege awakening the vengeance of God.

Hospitality leads to friendship, and these are humanistic forces impatient of the barriers of status and kinship. No race has ever manifested a greater genius for friendship than the Hellen; his sentiment concerning it was partly moral, partly religious, and often wholly romantic; and it was quite natural for Aristotle to devote two books of his ethical treatise to the subject of friendship. The Greek tended always to find a place in his religion for whatever he felt passionately about; and that is why Greek religion reflects so vividly the emotions and sentiments of the individual. Therefore he devised a religious consecration for friendship, by such invocations of

[1] *Od.*, 14. 405.

[2] P. 729 E; *cf.* a passage of similar tenor quoted by Stobæus, bk. 44, ch. 40, from the procœmia of Charondas.

Zeus as Φίλιος Ἑταίρειος, or of Apollo as Φιλήσιος. Whether at any time the Hellenes possessed, as some have supposed, the magical quasi-sacramental rite of swearing friendship by the mutual quaffing of each other's blood in wine, a rite not yet wholly extinct among the Teutonic peoples, is a question about which we have no clear evidence; but it appears that the common libations offered at friendly banquets might be considered to constitute a religious bond of fellowship. Thus we find a special association of fellow-banqueters, ἐρανισταί, who worship Zeus Φίλιος at Athens,[1] and such societies, or ἔρανοι as they were called, did not limit their membership to kinsmen or citizens, but often included aliens. And this cult of Zeus Philios, a peculiar product of a genial people to which we cannot find a parallel among the adjacent races, was given the widest humanistic sense by the later interpreters: most noteworthy are the words of Dio Chrysostom: "God is called Φίλιος and Ἑταιρεῖος (the god of friendship and fellowship) because he brings all mankind into union, and desires that they should be friends one with another."[2]

In concluding this inquiry into those factors of Greek religion that fostered the more expansive sentiment of humanism, whereby the religious spirit is released from the fetters of clan and tribe, we may consider the influence of the divine name in the polytheism. The magic or mystic power of the

[1] *Corp. Ins. Græc.*, 2. 1330.
[2] *Or.*, 12, Dind., p. 237.

divine name is a phenomenon of great moment in the history of religions, and much has already been written on this subject and on the text "*nomina sunt numina.*" [1]

The old Hellenes possessed this belief in the magic value of the divine name for the purposes of conjuration and invocation, though there is reason for thinking that in their more virile period they were less in bondage to it than were the surrounding peoples. At any rate the floating and vague conceptions of divinity were fixed and crystallised for the Hellene by the force of the divine names into clear and definite personalities. And the fact with which we must reckon in the earliest period of their history, that the great names of Zeus, Apollo, Poseidon, Hera, Athena, Artemis were a common heritage of the most widely scattered communities and tribes, was indeed the strongest obstacle to the growth of monotheism; but, on the other hand, was a strongly efficient principle of unity in the religion. A divinity called by the same name in Attica and Arcadia might be composite of many different local elements, and absorb different traditions from the varying religious emotions and experience of the aboriginal populations. Yet in the great centres of cult, among the leading peoples and in respect of the leading divinities, the identity of the divine names constrained the Hellenic mind to a certain synthesis of religious imagination; whereof the final issue was that there was one Apollo, not

[1] *Vide* Giesebrecht, *Die Alt-testamentliche Schätzung des Gottesnamens*; and my *Evolution of Religion*, pp. 183–193.

many Apollos, one Dionysos, not many Dionysoi.[1] Nor is there anything that hints at a belief even in the least-informed minds of Hellas that the Apollo of Athens or Sparta or Branchidai was a different personality from the Apollo of Delphi: nor, so long as the identical divine name was in vogue, any trace of that savage weakness of intellect and imagination that makes for particularism and the plurality of personality, such as is attested of certain villages in Italy, whose inhabitants possess different and rival images of the Madonna, and are capable of regarding the one Virgin as hostile to the other, losing entirely the idea of personal unity.

On the other hand, the later Greek at least was not so spell-bound by the magic of the name but that he was capable of the humane and tolerant idea that seemed so hard for the Semitic mind of Israel to grasp—namely, that mankind might worship the same godhead under different names: hence, as he came into the larger society of a world-empire and into closer contact with Oriental peoples, he was able with pliancy and sincerity to identify his Zeus with their Baal or their Amun, his Demeter with their Isis, his Dionysos with their Jahwé. The cruelest fanaticism and the most savage religious wars have been stimulated partly by this fallacious sentiment concerning the magic of names. The Greek escaped all this, nor did any religious war in the true sense of the word stain the pages of Greek

[1] The idol of Athena in Troy is regarded as embodying the same personality as the Hellenic Athena who is the chief foe of Troy.

history; and no unhappy logic compelled him to degrade the deities of other peoples into the rank of devils. If the modern man has arrived at the conception that difference of divine title is of little import, a conception of priceless value for the cause of human unity, he owes it mainly, as Rome owed it, to the mind of Hellas.

We may now consider certain special ideas in the Greek conception of divinity that illustrate the higher and broader view of a humanitarian religion.

A fundamental dogma of the old-world religious morality was that God rewards the good and punishes the evil; and scarcely any of the higher religions have been able to dispense with the doctrine that the Deity is a God of vengeance, who proclaims His nature in the phrase "Vengeance is Mine." Whatever we may think of it, it played a most efficient part in the construction and preservation of the morality of the ancient societies, and it still appears as a living belief among ourselves. The Greek in this respect stood on the same level with the Roman, the Israelite, and the Mesopotamian man. The belief vividly presented in his earliest literature that Zeus punishes the sinner and avenges wrong was embodied also in various cult-titles, by which the god was invoked, such as Τιμωρός, Παλαμναῖος, Ἀλάστορος, various names for "the avenger," with a special reference to vengeance for bloodshed, that law which formed the basis of Greek society and of much of Greek religion. Human society is thus reflected into the heavens, and morality gained something from the reflection; for the belief in God

as the avenger has sometimes been used to soften human vindictiveness.[1] With it was closely associated in the Greek mind the belief in the righteousness and justice of God, and no religion has ever exalted justice to a higher place in its system than was given it in the Hellenic. Dike was personified as the daughter of Zeus, and such personification was no mere fiction of the poets, but won its way at an early time into popular art, and later into actual cult, showing thus how powerful was the moral emotion that inspired the personification. And we find some of the most glowing imagination of Greek poetry radiating upon this abstraction which for us appears somewhat dull and on the whole uninspiring. A modern could scarcely speak as Euripides, who praises "the golden-gleaming countenance of Justice, nor is evening-star nor morning-star so wonderful as this."[2]

Yet in the higher popular religion and in the current theologic theories the qualities of mercy and compassionateness are at least as prominent in their conception of the highest divinity. The earliest spokesman of the young Hellenic race felt deeply the pity of things and adjudged pitifulness to be the highest human and divine attribute. Hence Apollo is made to reproach the deities for tolerating the mercilessness of Achilles.[3] The speech of Phœnix,

[1] *Vide* Sophocles' *Electra,* l. 173–177: "My child, Zeus is still great in heaven . . . leave to him thy exceeding bitter wrath, and be not too full of rage against those thou hatest nor yet forget them."

[2] *Vide* Dindorf, *Fragm.,* 490; Arist., *Nicom. Eth.,* 5. 2. p. 1129 *b,* 28.

[3] *Il.,* 24. 39, 45.

in which the famous passage about the power of prayer is found, is full of striking illustration of the same idea: "But, O Achilles! bend thy mighty spirit; it behoveth thee not to bear a ruthless heart; even the gods, whose worth and honour and might are even greater than thine, can be turned to pity." And there is this further interest in these beautiful verses, that the divine nature is held up as a moral standard for man. Yet no words in Homer on this theme strike so deep as the simple phrase in the speech of Zeus, μέλουσί μοι ὀλλύμενοί περ,[1] words untranslatable but revealing the pity of the high god for our ephemeral and sorrow-laden lives.

These are high thoughts and the expressions of a delicate religious sentiment. And the later literature, especially the Attic drama, full as it is of denunciations of God's wrath against sinners and of assurances of the slow but ever-sure operation of justice, yet dwells on and expands the conception of mercy. The typical and most illustrative passage is in the *Œdipus Coloneus*,[2] part of Polyneikes' appeal for his father's forgiveness: "Pity sits by the throne of Zeus, his peer in power over all the deeds of men." And we may find in the later literature, from the end of the fifth century onwards, hints and sometimes clear expressions of an ethical theory that approaches the Christian doctrine concerning forgiveness of wrongs.

The question is one of the most interesting, how far this more advanced spiritual idea was reflected

[1] *Il.*, 20. 21. [2] l. 1275.

in the actual worship. The earliest expression of it in this sphere is the appellative ἱκετήσιος, the god who hearkens to supplication, attached to Zeus by Homer,[1] who draws such epithets from a traditional stock of liturgical invocations proper to the special needs of the individual worshippers. It is curious indeed to find that, in the one Homeric passage where it occurs, this epithet which connotes mercy is also associated with a special function of the divine retribution—namely, with the wrath of the high god against those who harm the suppliant, and it is with this in view that Odysseus invokes the god by this call. But mainly it is the merciful nature of the god to which appeal is made by such appellatives as ἱκετήσιος and ἱκέσιος. The sinner himself, not merely the victim of wrong, throws himself upon the mercy of the deity; and according to a myth of the highest religious and ethical interest preserved by Æschylus and Pherekydes, Ixion, who treacherously murdered his father-in-law, and who is the Cain of Greek legend, the first murderer, is also the first suppliant. He wanders an outcast and finds "his punishment too great for him to bear," till Zeus Ἱκέσιος takes pity on him, purifies him, and receives him into his divine fellowship. The story is doubtless post-Homeric, at least in respect of its peculiar ethical colouring; as is also the myth of the purification of Orestes by Apollo. But the actual cult of Zeus, the suppliant's god, must be older than Homer; and an interesting form of it is

[1] *Od.*, 13. 217.

attested by a very archaic inscription found in Laconia, mentioning the strange title of Zeus Ἱκέτης as if Zeus himself were the suppliant: this is a salient example of that peculiar style of invocation in Greek liturgy noticed above, whereby the appeal to the deity was given a quasi-magical power by attaching to him an appellative which applied properly to the worshipper and expressed his needs.

The title just considered had always a close association with the sin of bloodshed, which weighed heavily on the more sensitive consciences of the later Greeks; but from the beginning it seems to have possessed, and it always retained, the broader significance, and it tended more than any other cult-fact to deepen the conception of divine mercy. Of the same spiritual value is the appellative Αἰδοῖος, "the compassionate," which Æschylus attaches to his supreme god in a noteworthy passage in the *Supplices*;[1] speaking of the suppliant fillets laid on the altar as the "emblems of Zeus, the God of Pity."[2] An important indication of the strong religious feeling that centred in this emotion is the personification and actual worship of Αἰδώς and Ἔλεος (Pity and Compassion) as "numina" or daimonic powers making for compassion. The record chiefly concerns Athens, the "natio misericors," but we have some traces of the cult of "pity" elsewhere.

It may be remarked, by the way, that the account

[1] l. 192.

[2] A cult-appellative, found later in Bithynia, Zeus Λιταῖος, the God of Prayer, expresses the same spiritual concept.

of these personifications of moral ideas, mental moods, and emotions is of importance for the general history of Hellenic psychology and ethics: for only those of the greatest intensity would be likely to impress the mind as a divine agency.

The doctrine of divine mercy was sufficiently proclaimed in the popular literature, especially in the drama, to have become a genuine tradition of the popular Hellenic faith. Euripides, the secret scorner of the polytheism and often the preacher of a profounder religious theory, used a phrase that was remembered, *οὐ γὰρ ἀσύνετον τὸ θεῖον ἀλλ' ἔχει συνιέναι*, "the divine power is not blunt-witted, but knows how to make allowances."[1] Interesting from the same point of view is the popular story told by Plutarch of the priest who, under special temptations, broke his temporary obligation of chastity, and hurried conscience-stricken to Delphi to learn by what penance or religious rites he could escape the divine wrath; the oracle answered in a memorable verse: "*ἅπαντα τἀναγκαῖα συγχωρεῖ θεός*,"[2] "God pardons all that is done under constraint," implying that there are certain temptations which human nature is too weak to resist.

It is natural to suppose that this conception of the deity as by nature mild and forgiving reacted on the traditional theory of divine vengeance, and on the religious view of the mystery of evil. The moral dogma, older in origin than the beginnings of their recorded history, that the gods punish the sinner,

[1] *Iph. Aul.*, 394. [2] Plut., *De Pyth. Orac.*, p. 404 B.

was often observed to be contradicted by experience; and Hellenic thought resorted to the same expedients to reconcile faith with fact as the Hebrew: "God's justice moves on silent ways."[1] "The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small";[2] "God is not like a hasty-tempered man, venting His anger at once on the occasion of every wrong"; "Justice visits some in the light of day, some in the twilight of life's close,"[3]—these are some of the typical expressions of the thinkers of Greece, striving to find a subtle justification for the belief in divine providence. Very rarely was it justified by any strong pronouncement of a doctrine of posthumous punishments or of moral retribution after death, a doctrine which scarcely touched the higher ethical theory of Greece, though it was alive and prominent in the mystic circles of Orphism. But the theory which had most strongly affected the moral belief of the people, and was long-enduring, was that which maintained that the sins of the fathers were visited upon the children of the later generations. And this, as we have seen, was derived from the old clan-system of morality; and though it is embedded in so much of Greek literature, and especially in the Attic drama, it could never satisfy the higher ethical speculation, and already in the sixth century Theognis begins to protest against it.[4]

[1] Eur., *Troad.*, 887.

[2] ὄψε θεῶν ἀλέουσι μύλοι, ἀλέουσι δὲ λεπτά· τὸ παρὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς . . . . λεγόμενον. *Sext. Empir.*, πρὸς γραμματικούς, 287.

[3] Æsch., *Choeph.*, 61–62.

[4] l. 731–742.

But the very postulate of divine vengeance or retribution was sometimes called into question by the bolder or more profound thinkers, who challenged the morality of the idea. Among the poets certain phrases of Euripides on this topic are notable: "It is not right for a god to be like a revengeful man," is the protest of Agaue to the vindictive Dionysos;[1] in the *Andromache* the comment of the messenger on the theory that the death of Neoptolemos at Delphi was brought about by Apollo in revenge for Achilles' insult to the god, is prompt and severe: "Then, like a base-minded man, the god remembered ancient grudges."[2] Such utterances really contain the germ of a new theology, more akin in character to the Buddhistic than to Hebraic; and we may imagine them to have been inspired by the striking passage near the beginning of the *Odyssey*, where Zeus proclaims it as a great truth that the gods never send evil to men, as they falsely suppose, but that all evil comes to men of their own evil choice, and from their own depravity. This pregnant idea is systematised into a dogma of later ethical philosophy: Demokritos, for example, maintains the perfect excellence of the deity, and refuses to allow a divine origin to any evil.[3]

The Pythagorean school is accredited[4] with the striking dogma: *βλάπτει θεὸς οὐ χολωθεὶς ἀλλ' ἀγνοηθεὶς, ὀργὴ γὰρ θεοῦ ἀλλότριον*—"we are injured, not by the anger of God, but by our ignorance of Him, for anger is wholly alien to the nature of God."

[1] *Bacch.*, 1348.
[2] *Androm.*, 1164.
[3] Stobæ., *Floril.*, 5. 24.
[4] Müllach, i. p. 497.

The same idea inspires Plato's theory of human and divine punishment as expounded in the early part of his *Republic*:[1] he constructs it wholly on a utilitarian educational basis; he reprobates the imputation of vengeance to God, and would regard Kant's vindictive theory of punishment as barbarous and immoral. In fact, it was the achievement of Greek theologic speculation to rise above the Hebraic concept of a god of vengeance.[2]

The philosophic optimism could never be wholly adopted by the popular theology, which failed to escape from the vindictive view of divine providence; but it corresponded on the whole with the popular feeling that the divinity was in the main merciful and beneficent. Greek religion did not recognise, as did the Mesopotamian, an evil God; the numerous titles attached to its deities are, with one or two exceptions, euphemistic and, we may say, philanthropic. Even the unseen beings of lower grade called δαίμονες were not usually imagined by the people as maleficent, for they included the kindly spirits of the departed, and we note in the later period the cult of Agathos Daimon, the good spirit of blessing and fertility. Yet even in the Homeric poems, which are not wholly innocent of the pessimistic thought that the high powers themselves might tempt a man to sin, we find the

[1] Cf. *Phædr.*, p. 247 A: *Φθόνος γὰρ ἔξω θείου χοροῦ ἵσταται.*

[2] It is noteworthy that Plutarch counts the Jews among those who do not believe in the goodness of God, on the ground, no doubt, of certain vindictive passages in the Old Testament.—*Moral.*, p. 1051 *e*.

germ of the idea that sin and temptation come from evil spirits; for Homer's Até is such an one. Later, in spite of Menander's protest[1] that even the daimon must be imagined as wholly good, the belief in evil spirits grew in intensity, fortified, no doubt, by the growing influence of magic; and the belief permeated deeply the later Neoplatonism and Pythagoreanism, which drew largely from Orphic sources. It appears strong, for instance, in Plutarch; for whom, as for others, it helped to solve the problem of evil in such a way as to relieve the high gods from all responsibility for it. A typical utterance, from this point of view, is that which was attributed to Charondas in the spurious proems of his *Laws*: "If a man is tempted by an evil spirit, he should pray in the temples that the evil spirit might be averted."[2]

The Greek had long been familiar with the fear of certain dangerous unseen influences, which were to be fended off by apotropæic rites; but he did not always imagine these as personal, nor did he often moralise them: his Eris and Adikia had no strong hold on the popular faith. Still less did either the popular imagination or the speculation of philosophers exalt the principle of evil into a majestic personality such as Satan or Ahriman, on which a dualistic theology and cosmology like the Persian might be constructed.

Hitherto we have been considering religion mainly under its social and ethical aspects. But as Hellenism meant more than a moral and orderly conduct of life,

[1] Clem. Alex., *Strom.*, 5, p. 260.
[2] Stobæ., *Floril.*, 44. 20.

and two of its most potent forces were science and art, so we find Greek religion takes more serious cognisance of these than any other religion of the world has ever done. As regards the religious consecration of Hellenic art the facts are familiar. In the earlier period, when Greek art had reached the heights of its renown, the greatest of its craftsmen in respect of their most important commissions worked for the State and for the deity. This is a fact not uncommon in the history of other civilisations. What is much rarer is the religious phenomenon that the artistic interest enters as a divine attribute into the characters of certain Hellenic deities and establishes a fellowship between the human craftsmen and the divine. Already in the Homeric period the artist is imagined as one dear to Athena: "He whose hands had all the carver's cunning, for Pallas Athena loved him above all men."[1] The author of an Homeric hymn[2] declares that it was thanks to the arts of Hephaistos, the god of the smithy-fire, that man was raised above the level of the cave-dweller; Plato speaks of the whole race of craftsmen as sacred to Athena and Hephaistos; and in another and more fanciful passage he expresses his belief that these two divinities, "in their love for philosophy and art," chose Attica in the aboriginal period as their home because this land "was specially suitable for the development of excellence and intelligence."[3]

It is in the study of Greek music and of the

[1] *Il.*, 5. 59. [2] Hom., *H.* xx. [3] *Laws*, p. 920 D.

ancient philosophic theories concerning it that we are confronted with facts of singular importance for the religious psychology of Greece. It is here that the characteristically Hellenic fusion of art, religion, and ethics is presented in its most striking light. It is not merely that religion is found giving laws to art and shaping its product—the survey of Christian art shows a similar dictation—but, what is rarer in the history of culture, we find that art itself was a constructive influence in the evolution of religion. This phenomenon I have tried to expose and explain elsewhere in an account of Apolline ritual.[1] At some early period, a certain severe style of music, chiefly stringed, became a tradition of the cult of Apollo, and helped to imprint upon the imagined character of this deity certain ethical traits, so that Apollo and Apolline music came to be associated with the noble self-restraint of a law-abiding temperament. The ethical poets and philosophers of Greece were aware of this, and a passage in Pindar's *Pythians* is typical: "He gives to whomsoever he will the music of the lyre and the spirit of song, bringing into men's hearts the peaceful law-abiding temper."[2]

On the other hand, the Dionysiac worship being essentially unconcerned with the civic virtues, but satisfying the instinct for ecstasy and self-abandonment, and stimulating an intenser vitality of individual consciousness, was associated with a wilder and more lawless music, chiefly of wind-instruments and generally with the so-called Phrygian harmony.

[1] *Cults*, vol. iv. pp. 243–252. [2] 5. 87.

Hence arose a fundamental distinction between two different types of music, suggested by and reacting upon certain religious ideas, a distinction which in the more complex art of modern Europe we mark between the styles, for instance, of Bach and Wagner. And hence we can understand the severe moral legislation which Plato would impose on the musicians, and his preference for the music of Apollo to the music of Marsyas, who stands for Dionysos.[1] Aristotle, while taking himself the same ethical view of art, is broader-minded and justifies the orgiastic music, as he might justify the Dionysiac ὄργια, as a salutary outlet for pent-up emotion.

The music, then, that through the madness of its ecstasy relieves the passions, and the music that ennobles and tranquillises the mind, are regarded equally as manifestations of divine power whereby the godhead engenders certain ethical and psychical moods in man.

This, then, is one of the salient features of Greek religion, that more obviously than any other it regarded art as a direct channel of spiritual or psychical communication between the divinity and mankind: the artist is the organ of God,[2] and while for us the personal Muses are a pedantic fiction, for the Greek people they were full and vital realities; and such a religious phenomenon as these figures

[1] *Republ.*, 399.

[2] Dio Chrysostom in his oration, *De Dei Cognitione*, regards such art as that of Pheidias as one of the modes by which God is manifested to men.

could only occur among a race who so deeply felt the divine or demoniac power of music that they could externalise it thus among the supernal agencies of the unseen world.

No less interesting, both for the special and for the comparative study of our subject, is the question of the relation between Hellenic religion and Hellenic science, for science and art make the double crown of Hellenism. But the question, which really involves nothing less than a detailed survey of the various attitudes adopted by Hellenic philosophy towards the popular beliefs, is far too extended for this course, and I can only attempt to summarise a few broad and essential facts.

One might dwell at length on certain negative factors that determined the relations between the Greek priest and the Greek man of science or philosophy. In the first place, there was no centralised or organised priesthood making dogmatic claims to any superior knowledge concerning the cosmos; the omniscience claimed by Delphi for Apollo was mainly practical, nor did the god pronounce on questions of physics or metaphysics. Secondly, Greek religion had no sacred books, and belongs to the class of those that Mahomet specially condemns; it had no inspired scriptures of which the literal and dogmatic interpretation could raise barriers against the progress of secular science. To say that Homer's poems were the Greek Bible is a popular saying, all the more false and misleading because of a slight ingredient of truth: for though Homer and Hesiod helped

much in the shaping of popular ideas about divinity, a man could disbelieve any particular statement in Homer or Hesiod without being thought immoral, irreligious, or a bad citizen. Everyone was free always to say with Euripides, "These are the unfortunate stories of bards." There could, in short, be no orthodoxy or heresy in old Hellas, because neither priesthood nor sacred book made any dogmatic demand. We recognise, indeed, that to proclaim direct atheism—at Athens at least, and probably in other Greek States—was as dangerous as it was to introduce alien and unauthorised worships, and we can understand that the civic religion would be protected by law against any deliberate and open attack. But it had no reason to consider itself endangered by free speculation concerning the physical causes of things and the ultimate laws of the cosmos. The isolated case of persecution of science in Greek history is the expulsion of Anaxagoras from Athens, and of that case we do not know the exact particulars. In fact, the Athenians were the only Hellenic people that might be charged with committing on more than one occasion the sin of fanaticism.

Ordinarily the path of the thinker and scientific student in Hellas from the sixth century onwards was legally and practically safe, and to this we may partly ascribe the strikingly swift and rich development in so many fields of speculation, and also the tolerant and sometimes sympathetic attitude that the philosophers adopted towards the popular polytheism.

One other negative fact is important in this regard.

Those who wished to speculate and make discoveries concerning the origin of man or the ultimate elements of the cosmos need not fear to awaken the prejudices of those who put faith in the early poets and mythologies of Greece. For there was no accepted tradition concerning the birth of man or his origin, no belief consecrated by immemorial story that either man or the world was created by a personal god. Zeus the creator scarcely figures at all in Greek mythology and cult, which in this respect differs momentously from the Hebraic and the Babylonian. For Homer water or ocean was the origin of all things, gods and men included; for Hesiod chaos, a vague, indeterminate cosmic substance: here were certain ideas congenial to a free science which could easily adapt them to some secular theory of evolution; nor was the dictum of Herakleitos, "Neither God nor man made the cosmos,"[1] antagonistic to the average theology as we know it.

Looking, then, at these negative conditions of his "milieu," we may say that the man of science found in Hellas a better opportunity than any that was open to him in Mesopotamia or Israel, under Islam or until recently under Christianity.

But the further question must be considered whether Greek religion gave any direct and positive encouragement to science or philosophy. It is not, of course, likely that the people, for whose average wants the worship of the city was established, would feel so strong an impulse towards these higher things as to

[1] Clem. Alex., *Strom.*, 5. 14, p. 711 (Bywater, *Fr.* xx.).

invoke their deities in their behalf by any cult-title or prayer. None of the appellatives of divinity used in the public liturgies could be given such an interpretation. The personification of Aletheia or Truth, as a moral and intellectual force, which we find occasionally in the literature, had no life or reality for the public.

Yet the public institutions of Hellas afford some examples of the close association between the higher intellectual culture and the popular religion. The schools and "palæstræ" were consecrated in some fashion to certain divinities—usually to Apollo, the Muses, Hermes, or Herakles. And Apollo was designated by one recorded appellative as the god of the λέσχαι, or the public colonnades, the usual meeting-place at Athens for philosophic debates.[1] Further, we have good reason to surmise that one great branch of modern European culture, the study and practice of medicine, is much indebted indirectly and directly to the worship of Asclepios, which developed at Epidauros and which from the fifth century onwards expanded over the whole of the Greek world, gaining a high pre-eminence and retaining a strong vitality in the latter days of paganism and familiarising men with the conception of the divine Saviour. An interesting inscription of the fourth century B.C. has been found at Epidauros, containing a long list of cures and revealing, amidst a prevailing atmosphere of dream-magic and miracle, a glimmering of science nevertheless. And Hippokrates, the father of our medical science, was believed

[1] *Vide* my *Cults*, vol. iv. p. 241, n.c.

to have derived his experience from the Asklepios-shrine at Kos.[1]

But, generally, the presiding divinity of the intellectual life of Greece was Apollo of Delphi; for as after the fifth century the oracle lost its political power, it became rather the organ for the higher public opinion on moral and spiritual matters, and this opinion was supposed to emanate from or to be sanctioned by the god. For the priests were wise enough to appropriate and enshrine in their temple fragments of the best thought of the philosophers, inscribing the walls, for instance, with maxims of the higher ethic. The desire of the oracle to express itself in the world of intellect is signalised by the famous deliverance concerning the intellectual supremacy of Socrates; and again by its utterance communicated to the philosopher Zeno, bidding him "to hold intercourse with the dead," a phrase enjoining a life of contemplative study.[2] Again, a late writer speaks of the philosophic life as the life "which Diogenes chose freely, the life which Apollo assigned and Zeus commended."[3]

Hellenic religion, though deeply concerned with morality and helping in many ways to establish a moral order of society, was doubtless inferior as a moral force to the Hebraic. But it may claim for itself the unique achievement that it proclaimed the divine consecration of the intellectual life; and our modern civilisation may have yet to gather some of the fruits of this idea.

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 240–241. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 242, n.c.
[3] Max. Tyr., *Dissert.*, 36. 5.

LECTURE VI

PERSONAL AND INDIVIDUAL RELIGION

THE subject which I have reserved for the close of this course will be judged as of far the greatest importance by those who are only familiar with the phenomena of our modern religion and religious experience. On the other hand, the student of the old-world and pre-Christian systems of cult is apt to be so impressed with their social and corporate character that he is tempted to ignore the question of their personal effect on the individual; and indeed the surviving records of some of them are wholly public and political, and give us no glimpse of their inner relations to the individual soul. But where the records speak at all on this question, it must always be one of high special as well as general interest; for it offers a test whereby the intelligent modern can determine the degree of affinity between any other religion and his own; also it makes its own contribution towards the classification of religions as lower and higher; since a religion that was wholly tribal or corporate, that addressed itself exclusively to the public or the group—whether nation, city, clan, or

family—having no relations or communication with the individual, would be classed as one of an embryonic or lower type ; for any society must be regarded as backward or prematurely stereotyped if its corporate consciousness is so all-pervading that the individual soul cannot free itself and make its isolated appeal or determine its private relation to the unseen world. Certainly in these few thousand years we have strangely shifted our point of view. But it is doubtful if such a rigidly corporate religion as has just been imagined ever existed on the earth ; at any rate, the Hellenic was never such. At any period of Hellenic religious history of which we dare speak, the Hellenic individual was doubtless awake, and the most severe corporate and socialistic discipline such as the Lycurgean could not suppress his voice. And the record of his voice is far from scanty ; in fact, so ample and manifold that to expose it in full would demand nothing less than the study of Homer, the lyric poets, the dramatists, philosophers, and historians of Greece. And all this is the theme of many treatises by distinguished scholars. The utmost I can now hope to effect is to indicate the main questions that the inquiry involves, to present the chief sources of evidence, and to determine what general conclusions can be safely drawn.

The question concerning the personal religion of any nation or any age may be investigated on the following lines : we may look to the average mass of the people and consider how far they are quickened with a fervent religious zeal, also how far their

practice is guided and influenced by the accepted religious ideals; whether the private conscience appears keenly susceptible to the sense of sin and the idea of moral responsibility; whether there is a growing or a prevalent desire for a closer personal communion with the divinity than may be offered by the established public worship. Or we may consider the few choice spirits of each age, those who assume the rôle of prophets and original thinkers on religious matters, and we may collect their utterances as materials for a history of higher religious thought: we must then endeavour to determine whether they have initiated or represented a movement that penetrated far into the masses or whether they spoke for themselves only without influence on their own or later generations. In any case, they interest deeply the student of this subject, for its history is chiefly the record of such men, while it is often obliged to be silent about the average man of the past for want of material by which to judge him from this point of view.

Perhaps no ancient religion has left so rich a store of evidence as the Hellenic in both these directions. And yet some of the questions posed above may be found impossible to answer with precision: for instance, how far in the various periods of Hellenic history the individual was personally zealous concerning this corporate religion of which I have been trying to indicate the moral potentialities, also how far it afforded an active stimulus to his will and conduct to endeavour to realise its ideals. The last question

is almost hopeless; for, as we are not near to possessing sufficient moral statistics for judging our own present, we are not likely to possess them in such measure as to gauge accurately any period of the past.

Hence our judgments on such matters are apt to be rhetorical and vague, and we contradict each other irresponsibly in speaking of the moral decadence of one age compared with another. It is easier to write a history of Greek religion than a history of Greek ethical practice. Furthermore, in forming our inductions on this subject, we must beware of the assumption, which experience shows to be fallacious, that general immorality is a proof of general scepticism or that intensity of religious feeling is an indication of high morality; the forces of the two spheres are not so easily correlated and do not always wax and wane together. Only sometimes, in fact, and in particular cases where some salient evidence is preserved, are we able to form a tolerably sure judgment concerning the sympathy between the moral practice and the religious conviction of the individual in ancient Greece. I cannot now, of course, test this statement in detail; but will mention merely a few outstanding examples where a careful study of the facts reveals to us, we must believe, a glimpse into the personal and individual mind of the average Hellene. If he was fervent and zealous about any part of his social creed, he was zealous about the morality and religion associated with his family-hearth and family-tomb; the proof of this is writ large over the monuments and literature of Hellenic

polytheism. Again, if his religious and ethical creed were almost silent concerning the duty of ordinary truthfulness—and the Hellene's reputation in this respect was low—yet he was most sensitive in regard to perjury, and his moral feeling concerning the sanctity of the oath was vitalised by the forces of an immemorial religion; nor have we any reason to suppose that the morality of an Athenian law-court was in this matter inferior to that which prevails in our own. Again, the horror of all civil bloodshed, which grew ever stronger in the later period and which, as we have seen, transcended the limitations of the older clan-morality, was a phenomenon that should figure prominently in the record of personal morality in Greece; and it was rooted deeply in religious sentiment, being associated both with the higher theistic thought and with the pervading awe of the world of avenging ghosts.

A striking example is the record in Plutarch of the horror which was excited in Athens by the news of a fearful civic massacre in Argos: such tidings, they felt, polluted their own air, and they ordered a purification of their whole assembly.[1]

The immorality of certain Greek myths concerning the deities has sometimes been a stumbling-block to the belief that the religion was closely interwoven with the higher personal morality of the people. We may evade this difficulty by maintaining that religion—that is to say, worship and serious thoughts about the deity—is often independent of the popular

[1] Plut., p. 814 B–C.

tales about the divine personages; folk-stories are irresponsible and rarely satisfy the higher religious consciousness. Greek worship was generally pure and solemn, expressed in forms that were usually beautiful and often elevating, while the mythology was sometimes frivolous and impure. Moreover, it is always to be remembered that there were no sacred books enshrining it, which it was an article of faith to believe; it was to this extent less powerful to exercise a harmful moral influence. Nevertheless, we have reason to suspect that there were certain temperaments that could be evilly affected by this element in the old legends; the chief speaker in Plato's *Euthyphron* justifies his unnatural severity against his father by the example of Zeus,[1] and we have other instances in Greek literature of detrimental morality based on mythic parallels. Therefore Plato is seriously anxious to purify Greek mythology, and many earnest passages in Attic tragedy and Pindar's Odes show the same endeavour.[2] It is also fair to bear in mind that there was much also in the divine and heroic sagas which the higher literature was able to use for moral and didactic effect; this is specially noticeable in Pindar, who actually preaches the doctrine of mercy and forgiveness to his royal patron Arkesilas on the text of the legend that Zeus pardoned and released the Titans.

[1] p. 5 E–6 A.

[2] *Cf.* Theognis, 1345; Æsch., *Eum.*, 641; Aristoph., *Nub.*, 904. 1080; for other examples *vide* Leopold Schmidt, *Ethic der Alten Griechen*, pp. 136–137.

We cannot hope to estimate exactly what was the moral influence of Greek mythology for good or for evil. But comparative history teaches us that the futilities and improprieties of religious folk-lore are often powerless to choke the development of a high ethical religion in the community and an ideal religious temperament in the individual. The Babylonian literature affords us a striking example of this. And Homer himself was aware of men of devout temperaments, for whom religion was a real power whatever idle stories might be told at banquets. He has left us the portrait of the pious swineherd, whose religious impulses are strikingly humanitarian and seem to arise from the inner principle of conscience; and a poet who in defiance of omens and superstition could utter the great phrase, "Best of omens is it to fight for one's native land," was capable of shaking off the fetters of conventional tribal thought and of penetrating to the heart of things moral and religious.

The testimony of the Homeric poems may be consulted also on another of the questions posed above as relevant to the present subject—namely, whether in the earlier or later period the Hellenic conscience had developed a high degree of sensitiveness to sin? Naturally it is only a question of degree and comparative intensity; for the psychic phenomenon, the consciousness of sin, is found in races at nearly every stage of culture, wherever, in fact, morality itself is found. Homer himself is sufficiently alive to it, as many passages might be

adduced to prove, while that which has been quoted already from the speech of Phœnix is evidence enough: "Men turn aside the wrath of the gods with sacrifice and prayers . . . when a man has committed trespass and sin," and the value of such illustrations is not at all affected by the fact that the poems make no mention of a peculiar form of piacular sacrifice, the holocaust or sin-offering. With these the later Greek ritual, both public and private, was familiar, and they are part of ancient Mediterranean tradition; nor would it be difficult to gather from the records of Greek worship examples of gloomy and sorrowful liturgy and ceremony.

But we have no right to suppose that these were usually accompanied by any clear conviction of sin, either communal or private. And Robertson Smith's dictum, that all religions of the antique tribal type were normally cheerful and genial, as the bond between the deity and the worshipper was one of kinship and mutual kindliness, certainly applies in the main to the Hellenic. A genial sense of "camaraderie" was inspired and maintained by sacred dance, song, and simple prayer, and especially by the sacrificial banquet at which the deity and his tribe were imagined as feasting together. And whatever ritual was in vogue for the purging of the people's sins was external and mechanical merely, accompanied by no call to real repentance, no appeal to the individual conscience. No prayer or formula has been handed down from the pre-Christian religion of Hellas that sounds the note of "Miserere

Domine." Nor is it heard anywhere in the higher literature; the agony of remorse in an Œdipus or a Herakles Mainomenos is not the agony of repentance in the modern sense. Even the religious-minded Æschylus, when he describes the natural ways whereby the sinner might hope to avert or soften the wrath of God,[1] can only think of various forms of sacrifices, blood-offerings, or oblations of fruits. Tears, prostration, the body cleaving to the pavement in abject ecstasy of repentance—these and similar piacular methods were as familiar to the early Babylonian as to the later Hebrew and Christian; they were wholly unfamiliar to the Hellene and alien to the religious spirit of Hellenism, in which can be found scarcely a touch of sentimentality, no servility, and no extravagant proneness to ecstasy. His religious enthusiasm tended to express itself in measured movement, orderly music, and song. The gulf between him and the divinity did not appear to him so vast, the divine nature so ineffable, so far above the standard of our moral life, as to crush him with a sense of his own unworthiness. Such feeling was natural to the Semite and other Orientals; it is prominent in Babylonian liturgies and hymns, in which the worshipper abases himself utterly as a slave before his deity. The phrase, δοῦλος τοῦ θεοῦ—"the slave of God"—common in early Christian inscriptions, came into the Greek Church from the East, and would have seemed an unnatural and

[1] In the *Niobe Frag.*, 156; *cf.* my article in *Classical Review*, 1897, pp. 296–297.

unworthy expression to the earlier Hellene: significant evidence is offered by a bilingual inscription found in Malta containing a dedication by Phœnicians and Greeks to the same divinity;[1] the formulæ used are mainly the same, except that the Phœnicians style themselves "the slaves of God," and the Greeks omit that conventional phrase of abasement.

Also it belongs to the present point of view to observe that no Greek religious or philosophic thinker ever came to formulate explicitly any doctrine of original sin. The germ of such a theory could be detected in the doctrine of the Orphic sects, which, being founded on a religion in its origin non-Hellenic, derived man's complex nature partly from a primally good, partly from a primally evil, source; and Plato was somewhat indebted to them for his unfortunate theory of the body as the impure prison-house of the soul, a theory destructive of the race-instinct of Hellenism. Platonic and later Greek thought contributed material indeed to the building up of the dogma of original sin and the essential evil of the sense-life; but it was not completed within the Hellenic period proper, nor ever brought home to the consciousness and faith of the average pre-Christian Hellene. Sin in the abstract, sin as a dark and all-pervading element of man's inner life, was not realised by him; he could only feel the sting of particular sins, and for these only could he wish to atone, of these to repent.

But we have evidence clear and trustworthy to

[1] *Corp. Inscr. Semit.*, i. No. 122.

show that his moral religious consciousness was growing more and more sensitive from the eighth century onwards in one direction—namely, in regard to the sense of purity and impurity, a sense that was often, but not always or necessarily, associated with the world of ghosts and of ghostly influences. At first the idea of purity was ritualistic merely, and therefore non-moral—associated with washing of hands, abstinence from certain food or from contact with the dead; but at least, by the fifth century B.C., it had engendered the higher spiritual doctrine of purity of heart and thought. In a former course of lectures I have tried to sketch the points in this progress.[1] And the subject only concerns our present inquiry because this craving for purity as a psychic state is a phenomenon of individualistic religion, for it appeals mainly to the inner religious consciousness of the personal and private soul. If all the community are sensitive to this emotion in the same degree, it may have its social value; for a man may shrink from incurring stain, lest he spread the miasma of impurity around his fellows. Moreover, certain communal effects of this cathartic instinct have already been observed; and if a whole tribe or community comes to regard itself as specially pure, its national consciousness may be quickened thereby, but generally in antagonism to other communities. More often we find that intense punctiliousness in matters of purity makes for egoism or sectarianism in religion. It is rarely a

[1] *Evolution of Religion*, pp. 88–162.

bond of broad social union. So far as it brings men together, it shuts them off into small groups, private societies of the élite, who are not as other men. The two most powerful examples of such societies in the Greece of the sixth and the succeeding centuries were the Orphic and Pythagorean brotherhoods, whose rules of purity were severe and fantastic. And such mystic brotherhoods, each usually possessing special rites of purification, were multiplying fast in the fourth and third centuries; and their general effect was against the communal spirit of the older social religion. The Pythagoreans demand to be buried in special consecrated ground, fearing even after death the impure contact of the uninitiated.

In its relation to advanced religion, the value of an elaborate purification-system is merely negative; it merely frees the body or the soul of the individual from evil influences that render it unfit for communion with the divinity. That has still to be sought by positive methods.

One such method had been from time immemorial the sacrifice. For in the earlier period at least, and frequently also in the later, the offering of the animal at the altar was felt to be something more than a bribe to the deity. The holy spirit of the altar passed into the animal that was consecrated and brought into contact with it; and those who afterwards partook of it might be conscious of eating holy flesh and thus enjoying temporary communion with the spirit of the divinity. And in other details of the

Homeric sacrifice and in ritual records of the later period we can, I think, discover clear traces of sacramental communion.[1]

But, after all, such intercourse with the divinity so gained belongs still to the communal and tribal religion; it did not offer to the individual worshipper the peculiar privilege of a nearer and more private intimacy with the godhead. Now, the average Greek may have remained satisfied down to the sixth century with this general clan-communion with the clan-deity; and there is a curious fragment of a Hesiodic poem extant in which the poet seems to protest against the hope of familiar loving intercourse between gods and men.[2]

But at some time, probably shortly after the period of Hesiod, two phenomena begin to exercise an influence that worked powerfully in favour of a more personal and individualistic religion freed from the fetters of clan and tribe; these were the expansion of the Eleusinian mysteries, and the establishment of the Orphic brotherhoods. The first event must have happened before the composition of the Homeric hymn to Demeter—that is, not later than 600 B.C.—for in that hymn the whole Hellenic world is encouraged to come to Eleusis to receive the blessings of initiation into the mysteries of the Mother and the Maid. There is no doubt that many alien Greeks

[1] *Vide* my article, "Sacramental Communion in Greek Religion," *Hibbert Journ.*, 1904.

[2] Fragment of the *Eoiai*, 96 (Rzach, p. 163): Zeus is said to have brought on the Trojan war in order that the immortals, seeing the sad fates of men, might no longer stoop to mortal lovers.

came to avail themselves of that invitation; the alien found himself there as one of a large group of catechumens; but these were bound by no gentile or corporate bond, for each was there for the good of his individual soul, seeking to establish intimate personal relations with the goddesses.[1] An elaborate ritual of purification was prescribed whereby the candidate was spiritually prepared for this communion. And it has been supposed that the means of grace included a form of sacrament, the drinking of the sacred cup into which the personality of the goddess might be infused by transubstantiation; but the evidence does not allow us to interpret this part of the ritual with certainty.[2] What is clear is that the fully initiated were privileged to see holy and mystic things, and that the revelation of these established between the individual and the great goddesses of life and death a close and personal tie, whereby his happiness after death was assured. By the time when these great mysteries of Eleusis became pan-Hellenic, this was probably their sole appeal to the peoples outside Attica—namely, their promise of posthumous salvation; and the craving for this grew ever stronger in the Hellenic world from the sixth century till the end of paganism. The old state-cults of the high deities possessed neither the power nor the desire to gratify this: hence chiefly we may explain the long-abiding

[1] Except perhaps the παῖς ἀφ ἑστίας, who may have represented the youth of the Athenian State. *Vide* my *Cults*, vol. iii. p. 164.

[2] Vide *Cults*, vol. iii. pp. 194–197.

influence and fascination which attached to the Eleusinian mysteries down to the Christian period.

A kindred phenomenon is the emergence of the Orphic brotherhoods, based on certain mystic elements in the Dionysiac worship that were ultimately derived from Thrace. These sects were beginning to make themselves felt as a new force in the sixth century B.C., and in the fifth and fourth centuries were perhaps the strongest religious influence in the Hellenic world. Like the Eleusinia, they strongly proclaimed the promise of posthumous happiness: and they were even less fettered than that other organisation by the old bonds of kinship, tribe, or status; for while the privileges of the Eleusinia were long limited to Hellenes, and later were extended only to Roman citizens, it appears that the Orphic brotherhoods preached to the whole world, Greek and barbarian, bond and free. Therefore the renown is theirs of being the first world-religion bearing a free message. Their means of grace were a ritual of purification more elaborate than the Eleusinia and fixed as a perpetual rule of life, and at times a mystic sacrament, in which the initiated drank the blood or devoured the body of his god. The form was savage, but the act was pregnant of religious consequences. Also, apart from its ritual, which may have been not always the same in each locality, the Orphic religion proclaimed a certain doctrine concerning the origin of the world and of man. And of this what concerns us most is the dogma that man is by origin half-divine and is of the kindred of God; that even in

this life man can attain temporarily to divine communion, and that in the next world the initiated and ceremoniously purified soul can after a further period of purgation enter into fellowship with the deity for ever.

We have here, then, in developed form a personal individual religion of strong vitality. Only, looking to its origin, we cannot regard it as belonging to pure Hellenism. It might, indeed, with its morbid insistence on ritual-purity, its egoistic craving for personal salvation, its indifference to social morality,[1] be regarded as the natural antagonist of the Hellenic civic system and civic spirit; and to have hastened the decay of the old society. Plato may for this reason among others have regarded it as dangerous. But we must not exaggerate its influence or prevalence, of which we have no trustworthy statistics. It set the fashion, indeed, for the formation of private religious societies, which became ever more numerous in the third and second centuries B.C.; but though many of these were devoted to alien deities, we find many others consecrated to the traditional powers of Hellas.[2] They must not, therefore, generally be regarded as hostile to the old pantheon; but they all indicate a change in the religious temper, a craving

[1] One effort towards the moral reform of society was attributed to Pythagoras and his disciples, but only by the late witness Iamblichus, who describes how the philosopher preached against the sexual licence prevailing at Kroton and persuaded the men of this city to be more faithful to their wives: *De Vit. Pythag.*, 132.

[2] Foucart, *Associations Religieuses*, pp. 108–109, tends to ignore this.

for a more personal, more individual, relation with God. How far these free religious brotherhoods and mystic societies directed the conduct and morality of the members, is a question which there is no sufficient evidence to answer definitely. We may dismiss, at least, the occasional charges of immorality. *A priori* we should suppose that where the deities were conceived as righteous, merciful, and pure, as on the whole was the case at Eleusis, the quickened and intensified sense of fellowship between them and the initiated would give some stimulus to a higher standard of conduct henceforth; and there is some slight evidence that foul action on the part of one who had passed through the Eleusinia was considered as specially scandalous.[1] But the voice of antiquity is generally silent concerning any claim of the Mystai to possess a higher morality; with the exception of a single passage in Diodorus Siculus[2] maintaining that those who had been initiated into the mysteries of Samothrace became generally more righteous than they had been before. But these rites were un-Hellenic, or, at the best, only half-Hellenised.

Whatever view we take on this ethical question, we must recognise that the increased tension of religious energy and consciousness in the individual is an important phenomenon in his mental history and in the history of society, apart from its ethical effects.

One result of this deeper sense of nearness to the unseen powers is that religion becomes more inward,

[1] *Vide* my *Cults*, vol. iii. p. 191. [2] 5. 49.

more concerned with the personal spirit of man than with the external and mechanical acts of ritual performed by the groups of worshippers. And this change in its centre of interest can be traced in the literature down from an early period.

One utterance often delivered by spiritual religion is that man's good consists not in external prosperity but in a certain inner condition of soul: the earliest example of this idea in Greek literature is a fragment of Hesiod,[1] belonging to the poetical contest between himself and Homer, in which the latter poet is asked, "What of all things is the best to pray the gods for?" and answers, "One should pray that one may be law-abiding in one's soul for ever." Here is the germ of a spiritual ethic developed by Plato, Socrates, and the later thinkers.[2]

The religious stress thus laid upon the soul evoked much new spiritual thought of great import for our mental history. In the higher religious theory the idea becomes dominant that God sees the heart of man and judges us by our thoughts and intentions as well as by our outer actions; it receives its first expression, so far as our record goes, in Pittakos and Thales, for to both is attributed the same answer to the question: "Are the gods cognisant of every sin

[1] *Hom. et Hes. Certam.*, fr. 158 Rzach.

[2] *Cf.* the prayer of Socrates, Plat., *Phædr.*, 279 B: δοίητέ μοι καλῷ γενέσθαι τἄνδόθεν, and the sentiment attributed to Bias of Priene, "Despise all those things that you will not need when you are released from the body, but those things that you will need then, discipline yourself to attain and invoke the gods to help you" (Stobæ., *Flor.*, E. 30); *vide* my *Evolution of Religion*, pp. 204–205.

that a man commits?" "Yes, and of every evil intention."[1]

And in the fifth century this momentous idea was secured for the popular religion through the medium of the Delphic oracle: Herodotus[2] recounts how a certain man, Glaukos of Sparta, with whom a large sum of money had been deposited on trust, came to consult the god with the audacious question whether he might break his trust and purloin the money without danger to himself. The prompt denunciations of the oracle reduced him to fear and repentance; but in answer to his prayers for forgiveness, the Pythoness sternly proclaimed that God judges us by our thoughts, and that to tempt God even in thought was as heinous a sin as the act which he had contemplated.

To the same range of thought belongs the view that man's soul was the more divine part of his nature, also that the godhead was not so much a corporeal personality, such as the popular religion imagined it, as a spirit or a soul-power, the *νοῦς* or the *ψυχή* of the universe.[3] This conception of the deity could only prevail in philosophic circles; but Euripides, the poet of all others who loved to play irresponsibly with the current philosophy of his age, and possessed the gift to find the memorable phrase, did his best to introduce it to the people: in more than one passage he

[1] Attributed to Pittakos, Diog. Laert., 1. 76; to Thales, *id.*, 1. § 35.

[2] 6. 86.

[3] Thales is the earliest thinker to whom this view is attributed: *Θαλῆς νοῦν τοῦ κόσμου θεὸν λεγει*, Plut., 881 E; *cf.* Arist., p. 411.

suggests not only that God may be Mind, but that He may be identical with the mind of man—"The mind in each one of us is God" is a fragmentary utterance attributed to Euripides, or with less authority to Menander.[1] But a genuine and most characteristic sentence is found in the former poet's *Troades*: "Oh, thou that stayest the earth and hast thy firm throne thereon, whosoe'er thou art, unfathomable to human knowledge, whether thou art Zeus, or the necessity of nature, or the mind of man, to thee I raise my voice!"[2] It is also noteworthy that a popular lyrist, Melanippides, before the age of Euripides, expressed the concept of God as an eternal spirit: "Hear me, Father, O! Mystery of our life, Lord of the ever-living soul."[3]

Now, an inevitable corollary of this theologic concept and this view of man's nature is that the individual can enjoy direct communion with God, not merely or necessarily through the ritual of sacrament or magic means, but through inward sympathy of spirit; and the attainment of this unity with the divinity, or the closest possible approximation to him, begins to be held out by the leading ethical thinkers as the ideal of a virtuous life; and here we find morality striving towards the same end as that which the Greek mysteries professed to attain by other means. In our record we should give precedence to a sentiment of Charondas, the legislator of Katana of the sixth century—if we could regard anything that

[1] *Vide* Dind., *Frag.*, 1007. [2] *Troades*, 884.
[3] Clem. Alex., *Strom.*, p. 716.

is attributed to him as authentic: "No unjust man can have communion with God."[1] A more definite and more pregnant saying was attributed to Pythagoras, and might be rightfully claimed at least by the Pythagorean school.[2] To the question, "By what kind of action do men most resemble the gods?" he is said to have responded, "By attaining to truth." He is probably not alluding to simple truthfulness in our ordinary statements, but to the possession of the highest truths of thought and philosophy whereby we become most like to the divine nature. For it was as characteristic of the Greek genius to lay stress on the intellectual, as it was for the Hebraic to lay stress on the moral attributes of the godhead. The same idea as that attributed to Pythagoras presents itself frequently in the higher metaphysic of Plato, and is accepted by the more secular Aristotle, who places Σοφία or metaphysical truth as the highest goal of human effort, as the crown of all virtue, because it brings men into nearest likeness to God. Here, as so often, we find Greek philosophy developing on lines that are distantly parallel to certain developments of Greek popular religion, for this, too, as has been shown, possessed a natural sympathy with much of the intellectual life of man.

But also moral action and the moral life were sometimes supposed by the leading ethical teachers to enable man to achieve divine communion. In the *Theætetus* Plato declares that the man who is most

[1] Stobæ., 44. 40; Meineke, vol. ii. p. 180.
[2] Stobæ., 11. 25; Mein., i. p. 252.

just bears the nearest likeness to God,[1] and again in the *Laws*,[2] in a passage where he emphasises the divine nature of the soul, he proclaims immorality to be a dishonour done to the essence of the soul.

This quickened sensitiveness of the religious consciousness, and this belief in the attainment of divine communion through purely spiritual methods, were certain to engender in the more enlightened natures a higher theory concerning prayer, sacrifice, purification, and all external ritual. And on all these topics Greek religious philosophy has left us some memorable utterances and teaching. It represented true prayer as an inward communion with the divinity,[3] rather than as a petition for external blessings; true sacrifice as the "widow's mite,"[4] or the sacrifice of the righteous heart;[5] true purification, not as the ceremonious washing of hands, but as the inward cleansing of the soul. Already, in the earlier part of the fifth century, Epicharmes had declared: "Thou art pure in thy whole body if thou art pure in soul,"[6] and spiritual purity becomes regarded at last as a positive state of blessedness. At the beginning

[1] 176 *b*. [2] 727.

[3] Maximus Tyrius, *Dissert.*, 11; *cf.* Porphyry ap. Proclum, *In Tim.*, 2. 64 B; 2. 65; Sallustius, *De Diis et Mundo*, c. 16.

[4] The *Anthologomicum* of Orion (Stobæus, Meineke, iv. p. 264) contains a quotation from a lost play of Euripides—*εὖ ἴσθ' ὅταν τις εὐσεβῶν θύῃ θεοῖς κἂν μικρὰ θύῃ τυγχάνει σωτηρίας* ("Know well that when one sacrifices to the gods in piety, one wins salvation though the sacrifice be little").

[5] *θυσία τῶν θεῶν γνωμὴ ἀγαθή*, *Sacra Parall.*, Tit., ix. p. 640; *cf.* Aristides, i. p. 753 (Dindorf).

[6] Clem. Alex., *Strom.*, p. 844.

of the *Aureum Carmen* of Hierokles, a product of the later Pythagoreanism, we read that "God has no fairer temple on earth than the pure soul."

As personal religion grew in intensity, the spirit of individualism grew also, and the old religion of kinship and tribe, and the morality of kin and status, must have waned in proportionate degree. In this there was some gain and some loss. Plato, the chief organ of the more profound religious spirit, himself preached, as we have seen, the social morality of the Greek city-state; but philosophic thought in other circles inclined men to the celibate life; and Euripides, whom later individualism might claim as its apostle, not infrequently comments querulously on the disadvantages of the married state; and his cry of weakness—ζηλῶ δ' ἀγάμους ἀτέκνους τε βροτῶν[1]—is echoed in the younger comedy. To the same trend of thought belongs the nobler sentiment that a good man does not wholly depend on his "polis" for his happiness; Demokritos may have been the first to have given voice to this idea: "Of a virtuous soul the whole universe is the fatherland,"[2] but none could have ever expressed it more beautifully than Euripides: "The whole expanse of air is open to the eagle's flight, and every land is native soil to the noble man,"[3] though when he chose he could as well champion the narrower traditional view.

The new spirit may have helped to spread a

[1] *Alc.* 882.
[2] Stob., *Floril.*, 40. § 7 (Meineke, vol. ii. p. 65).
[3] *Id.*, 40. § 9 (Mein., ii. p. 71).

different theory concerning slavery; for while Aristotle was guilty of the view that certain barbarian races were "by nature" designed to be enslaved to the Hellene, the last part of the doctrine of the American Revolution that "all men are born free and equal" begins to be heard in the fourth century B.C.; a fragment of the poet Philemon, of the younger Attic comedy, expresses the new dogma that "no one is by nature born a slave."[1]

It would be impossible within the limits of this short sketch to trace in detail the workings of this new spirit in the special parts of the moral domain. But we may note in passing that while it tended to break down the old barriers, it does not seem to have succeeded in substituting for the narrow system of civic duties the clear ideal of humanitarian philanthropy: nor did any Greek pre-Christian school proclaim the general duty of active benevolence or philanthropic mission-work.[2]

Its great gain was the broadening of the religious horizon. We seem to breathe an ampler air, and to recognise in later Hellenism, before the clouds of mystic theosophy troubled the sky, the main features of our modern spiritual world.

It remains a question of difficulty how far the humanitarian spirit of philosophic speculations on religion and ethics influenced the mass of the people

[1] Frag. 39, Meineke-Bothe., p. 771.

[2] The nearest approach to such a moral idea is perhaps found in Apollonius of Tyana, *Ep.* 392, *Philostrati Opera*, Kayser, 1. p. 351 ("one gratifies the gods not by sacrifice, but by achieving wisdom and by doing all the good in one's power to deserving men").

and the popular worship and cult-ideas. Certainly it was not confined to the narrow academic society of the schools: it could touch the people through Euripides and after him chiefly through Menander, who used the new comedy as a vehicle for the expression of much that belongs to a high personal religion—we are arrested by such lines as, "The mind's light is to fix its gaze ever on God"[1]—and of moral judgments that occasionally anticipate the teaching of the New Testament.

The forms of the old cults and the divine personalities maintain themselves with little change for many centuries. But the new humanitarian religious spirit was potent among the causes that led to the extinction of Hellenic polytheism; the people turned with eagerness and devotion to new divinities such as Asklepios, Cybele and Attis, and Isis, for these came to them not as the deities of any family, or tribe, or city, but as world-powers appealing to mankind and to the individual. On the other hand, Demeter and Kore, the mother and daughter of Eleusis, retained much of their power until the conquest of Christianity only because they, alone of the Olympians, had early broken the bonds of clan and caste and had invited the civilised world to their fellowship.

Therefore as the old-world system of the free city-state, that genial family-union of kinsmen, slowly perished, the gods of kinship that had grown up with

[1] Φῶς ἐστι τῷ νῷ πρὸς θεὸν βλέπειν ἀεί, Meinek., vol. iv. p. 356; Γνῶμαι Μονόστιχοι, 589.

it perished with the social fabric that was partly their own creation. Apollo and Athena were too much citizens to adapt themselves to the new order. But we who believe that the world's culture owes an immeasurable debt to the ancient Polis, should now recognise that part of that debt on our rich inheritance of art, morality, and thought is due to that political religion.

APPENDIX

P. 21. For the aboriginal character of Zeus *vide* Mr Cook's articles in the *Classical Review*, 1903 and onwards, on "Zeus Jupiter and the Oak."

P. 24. The question of the existence of a matrilinear society in prehistoric Greece has been critically considered in a paper "On the Alleged Evidence for Mother-Right in Early Greece," by Mr H. J. Rose, in *Folklore*, September 1911.

P. 30, n. 4. For this curious marriage-custom *vide* Mr Halliday's article in *Annual of the British School*, 1909–1910, p. 215, "Note on Herodotos vi. 83 and the Hybristika."

P. 31, l. 10. The important words are found on the second column of the payprus. *ἐκ τούτου δὲ ὁ νόμος ἐγένετο καὶ θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι, ib.*, p. 5.

P. 36, l. 1–2. "*τὸ δ' ἄρσεν ἔστηκ' ἐν δόμοις ἀεὶ γένος θεῶν πατρῴων καὶ τάφων τιμάορον.*"

P. 36, l. 16. "*χρὴ τῆς ἀειγενοῦς φύσεως ἀντέχεσθαι τῷ παῖδας παίδων καταλείποντα ἀεὶ τῷ θεῷ ὑπηρέτας ἀνθ' αὑτοῦ παραδιδόναι.*"

P. 41, l. 2. "*ἀδικεῖ γενεθλίως θεώς, οἴκῳ καὶ συγγενείᾳ οὐ γνασίως ἐπικούρως ἀλλὰ νόθως παρεχομένα· ἀδικεῖ δὲ τὼς φύσει θεὼς οὕσπερ ἑπομόσασα μετὰ τῶν αὑτᾶς πατέρων τε καὶ συγγενῶν συνελεύσεσθαι ἐπὶ κοινωνίᾳ βίω καὶ τέκνων γενέσει τᾷ κατὰ νόμον.*"

P. 46, l. 23. "*συγγένειαν δὲ καὶ ὁμογνίων θεῶν κοινωνίαν ἅπασαν ταὐτοῦ φύσιν αἵματος ἔχουσαν τιμῶν τις καὶ σεβόμενος εὔνους ἂν γενεθλίους θεοὺς εἰς παίδων αὐτοῦ σποράν ἴσχοι.*"

P. 47, l. 5. "*τοὺς ἄνω θεοὺς φοβείσθων, οἳ τῶν ὀρφανῶν τῆς ἐρημίας αἰσθήσεις ἔχουσι, καὶ τὰ περὶ ταῦτα ὀξὺ μὲν ἀκούουσι, βλέπουσί τε ὀξύ, τοῖς δὲ περὶ αὐτὰ δικαίοις εὐμενεῖς εἰσί, νεμεσῶσί*

τε μάλιστα αὖ τοῖς εἰς ὀρφανὰ καὶ ἔρημα ὑβρίζουσι, παρακαταθήκην εἶναι μεγίστην ἡγούμενοι καὶ ἱερωτάτην."

P. 49, l. 24. Stobæus, *Florileg.* (Meineke, iii. p. 74): ἀμβλίσκειν ἀπεῖπον ταῖς γυναῖξι . . . . πῶς δ' οὐχὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς πατρῴους θεοὺς ἐξαμαρτάνοιμεν ἂν καὶ ἐς τὸν ὁμόγνιον Δία τὰ τοιαῦτα πράττοντες. In an article in the *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*, 906, p. 312, on "Ἄωροι Βιαιοθάνατοι," M. Salomon Reinach traces the idea of the immorality of abortion to Orphism; the evidence is indirect and somewhat frail; vide *Archiv*, 1909, p. 224, where Dr Sam Wide criticises his theory.

P. 57, l. 3. Fragment of comedy by Alexis: τοῖς γὰρ ὀρθῶς εἰδόσι τὰ θεῖα μεῖζον μητρὸς οὐκ ἔστιν ποτε.

P. 57, l. 29. There is no reasonableness in the view that the late cult-record of Zeus-Agamemnon proves that Agamemnon was originally Zeus; *vide* Lykophron, *Cassandra*, 1122, and Schol. Lykophr., 1369.

P. 79, l. 8. "ὅστις φοβεῖται τὸν πατέρα κἀσχύνεται οὗτος πολίτης ἀγαθὸς ἔσται κατὰ λόγον, καὶ τοὺς πολεμίους δυνάμενος κακῶς ποιεῖν."

P. 82, n. 2. Frag. 514: ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως σκοπεῖν χρεὼν | τὴν εὐγένειαν· τοὺς γὰρ ἀνδρείους φύσιν | καὶ τοὺς δικαίους τῶν κενῶν δοξασμάτων, | κἂν ὦσι δούλων, εὐγενεστέρους λέγω. Frag. 515: δοῦλον γὰρ ἐσθλὸν τοὔνομ' οὐ διαφθερεῖ, πολλοὶ δ' ἀμείνους εἰσὶ τῶν ἐλευθέρων.

P. 96, l. 16. *De Fals. Legat.*, 115: μηδεμίαν πόλιν τῶν Ἀμφικτυονίδων ἀνάστατον ποιήσειν μήδ' ὑδάτων ναματιαίων εἴρξειν μήτ' ἐν πολέμῳ μήτ' ἐν εἰρήνῃ, ἐὰν δέ τις ταῦτα παραβῇ, στρατεύσειν ἐπὶ τοῦτον καὶ τὰς πόλεις ἀναστήσειν.

P. 99, l. 20. The accuser and the accused before the court of the Areopagos must take the oath στὰς ἐπὶ τῶν τομίων κάπρου καὶ κριοῦ καὶ ταύρου, "standing on the severed limbs of a boar, a ram, and a bull," thus putting himself into communion with the divinity to whom these had been sacrificed and whose spirit was in them.

P. 102, l. 2. "ὃς μέν τ' αἰδέσεται κούρας Διὸς ἁσσον ἰούσας
τὸν δὲ μέγ' ὤνησαν καί τ' ἔκλυον εὐχομένοιο·
ὃς δέ κ' ἀνήνηται καί τε στερεῶς ἀποείπῃ,
λίσσονται δ' ἄρα ταί γε Δία Κρονίωνα κιοῦσαι
τῷ Ἄτην ἅμ' ἕπεσθαι, ἵνα βλαφθεὶς ἀποτίσῃ."

P. 104, l. 19. "*φίλιος δὲ καὶ Ἑταιρεῖος (Ζεὺς ἐπονομάζεται), ὅτι πάντας ἀνθρώπους συνάγει καὶ βούλεται φίλους εἶναι ἀλλήλοις.*"

P. 108, n. 1. "*ἔτι μέγας οὐρανῷ*
Ζεὺς, ὃς ἐφορᾷ πάντα καὶ κρατύνει.
ᾧ τὸν ὑπεραλγῆ χόλον νέμουσα
μήθ' οἷς ἐχθαίροις ὑπεράχθεο μήτ' ἐπιλάθου."

P. 109, l. 21. "*ἀλλ' ἔστι γὰρ καὶ Ζηνὶ σύνθακος θρόνων*
Αἰδὼς ἐπ' ἔργοις πᾶσι, καὶ πρὸς σοὶ, πάτερ,
παρασταθήτω."

P. 142, n. 2. (Stobæus' quotation from Bias.) *Ὧν τοῦ σώματος ἀπαλλαγεὶς οὐ δεήσῃ, ἐκείνων καταφρόνει πάντων· καὶ ὧν ἀπαλλαγεὶς δεήσῃ, πρὸς ταῦτά σοι ἀσκουμένῳ τοὺς θεοὺς παρακάλει γίνεσθαί σοι συλλήπτορας.*

P. 144, l. 6. "*ὦ γῆς ὄχημα κἀπὶ γῆς ἔχων ἕδραν*
ὅστις ποτ' εἶ σὺ, δυστόπαστος εἰδέναι,
Ζεὺς, εἴτ' ἀνάγκη φύσεος εἴτε νοῦς βροτῶν."

P. 144, l. 12. "*κλῦθί μοι, ὦ πάτερ, θαῦμα βροτῶν,*
τᾶς ἀειζώου ψυχᾶς μεδέων."

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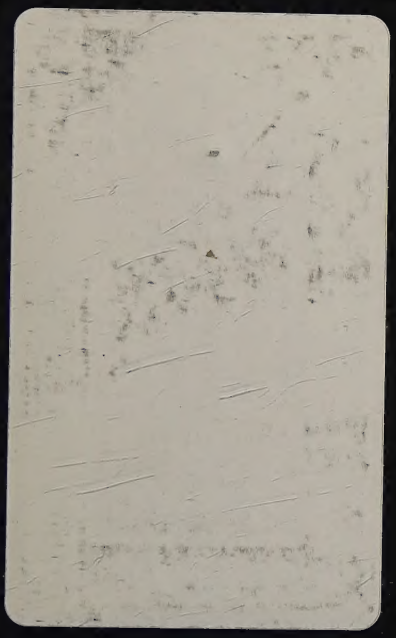

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